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THE WORKS

OF

SAMUEL RICHARDSON.

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THE WORKS

OF

SAMUEL RICHARDSON.

WITH A

PREFATORY CHAPTER OF BIOGRAPHICAL CRITICISM

BY

LESLIE STEPHEN.

IN TWELVE VOLUMES.

VOL. IX.

HENRY SOTHERAN & CO.,
LONDON: 136 STRAND—36 PICCADILLY.
MANCHESTER: 49 CROSS STREET.
MDCCCLXXXIII.

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THE HISTORY

OF

SIR CHARLES GRANDISON.

In a Series of Letters.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

HENRY SOTHERAN & CO.,
LONDON: 136 STRAND—36 PICCADILLY.
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MDCCCLXXXIII

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PREFACE.

THE Editor of the following Letters takes leave to observe, that he has now, in this publication, completed the plan, that was the object of his wishes, rather than of his hopes, to accomplish.

The first collection which he published, entitled 'PAMELA,' exhibited the beauty and superiority of virtue in an innocent and unpolished mind, with the reward which often, even in this life, a protecting Providence bestows on goodness. A young woman of low degree, relating to her honest parents the severe trials she met with, from a master who ought to have been the protector, not the assailer, of her honour, shows the character of a libertine in its truly contemptible light. This libertine, however, from the foundation of good principles laid in his early years by an excellent mother; by his passion for a virtuous young woman; and by her amiable example, and unwearied patience, when she became his wife; is, after a length of time, perfectly reclaimed.

The second collection, published under the title of 'CLARISSA,' displayed a more melancholy scene. A young lady of higher fortune, and born to happier hopes, is seen involved in such variety of deep distresses, as lead her to an untimely death; affording a warning to parents against forcing the inclinations of their children in the most important article of their lives; and to children, against hoping too far from the fairest assurances of a man void of principle. The heroine, however, as a truly *Christian heroine*, proves superior

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to her trials; and her heart, always excellent, refined and exalted by every one of them, rejoices in the approach of a happy eternity. Her cruel destroyer appears wretched and disappointed, even in the boasted success of his vile machinations: But still (buoyed up with self-conceit and vain presumption) he goes on, after every short fit of imperfect, yet terrifying conviction, hardening himself more and more; till, unreclaimed by the most affecting warnings, and repeated admonitions, he perishes miserably in the bloom of life, and sinks into the grave oppressed with guilt, remorse, and horror. His letters, it is hoped, afford many useful lessons to the gay part of mankind, against that misuse of wit and youth, of rank and fortune, and of every outward accomplishment, which turns them into a curse to the miserable possessor, as well as to all around him.

Here the Editor apprehended he should be obliged to stop, by reason of his precarious state of health, and a variety of avocations which claimed his first attention: But it was insisted on by several of his friends, who were well assured he had the materials in his power, that he should produce into public view the character and actions of a man of TRUE HONOUR.

He has been enabled to obey these his friends, and to complete his first design: and now, therefore, presents to the public, in Sir CHARLES GRANDISON, the example of a man acting uniformly well through a variety of trying scenes, because all his actions are regulated by one steady principle: A man of religion and virtue; of liveliness and spirit; accomplished and agreeable; happy in himself, and a blessing to others.

From what has been premised, it may be supposed, that the present collection is not published ultimately, nor even principally, any more than the other two, for the sake of entertainment only. A much nobler end is in view. Yet it is hoped the variety of characters and conversations neces-

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sarily introduced into so large a correspondence as these volumes contain, will enliven as well as instruct: the rather, as the principal correspondents are young ladies of polite education and of lively spirits.

The nature of familiar letters, written, as it were, to the *moment*, while the heart is agitated by hopes and fears, on events undecided, must plead an excuse for the bulk of a collection of this kind. Mere facts and characters might be comprised in a much smaller compass: but, would they be equally interesting? It happens fortunately, that an account of the juvenile years of the principal person is narratively given in some of the letters. As many, however, as could be spared, have been omitted. There is not one episode in the whole, nor, after Sir CHARLES GRANDISON is introduced, one letter inserted but what tends to illustrate the principal design. Those which precede his introduction will not, it is hoped, be judged unnecessary on the whole, as they tend to make the reader acquainted with persons, the history of most of whom is closely interwoven with that of Sir Charles.

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NAMES OF THE PRINCIPAL PERSONS.

—o—

MEN.

George Selby, Esq.
John Greville, Esq.
Richard Fenwick, Esq.
Robert Orme, Esq.
Archibald Reeves, Esq.
Sir Rowland Meredith, Knt.
James Fowler, Esq.
Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, Bart.
The Earl of L——, a Scotch Nobleman.
Thomas Deane, Esq.
SIR CHARLES GRANDISON, Bart.
James Bagenhall, Esq.
Mr. Solomon Merceda.
John Jordan, Esq.
Sir Harry Beauchamp, Bart.
Edward Beauchamp, Esq., his son.
Everard Grandison, Esq.
The Rev. Dr. Bartlett.
Lord W——, uncle to Sir Charles Grandison.
Lord G——, son to the Earl of G——.

WOMEN.

MISS HARRIET BYRON.
Mrs. Shirley, her grandmother, by the mother's side.
Mrs. Selby, sister to Miss Byron's father, and wife of Mr. Selby.
Miss Lucy and Miss Nancy Selby, nieces to Mr. Selby.
Miss Orme, sister to Mr. Orme.
Mrs. Reeves, wife of Mr. Reeves, cousin to Miss Byron.
Lady Betty Williams.
The Countess of L——, wife of Lord L——, elder sister to Sir Charles Grandison.
Miss Grandison, younger sister to Sir Charles.
Mrs. E. Grandison, aunt to Sir Charles.
Miss Emily Jervois, his ward.
Lady Mansfield.
Lady Beauchamp.
The Countess Dowager of D——.
Mrs. Hortensia Beaumont.

ITALIANS.

Marchese della Porretta, the father.
Marchese della Porretta, his eldest son.
The Bishop of Nocera, his second son.
Signor Jeronymo della Porretta, third son.
Conte della Porretta, their uncle.
Count of Belvedere.
Father Marescotti.
Marchesa della Porretta.
Signora Clementina, her daughter.
Signora Juliana Sforza, sister to the Marchesa della Porretta.
Signora Laurana, her daughter.
Signora Olivia.
Camilla, Lady Clementina's governess.
Laura, her maid.

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possibility of escape is open to her; and that he is determined she shall be his, whether she will or no.—He is proceeding to take indecent familiarities, when her screams bring in one of the women, who remonstrates with him on his behaviour (he having assured them, prior to the young lady's being brought into the house, that no violence should be used towards her); and thus she gains a momentary respite from his odious persecutions . . . . 180—183

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promises amendment of life, if Sir Charles would intercede with Miss Byron's friends to drop all legal prosecutions against him: and farther informs Sir Charles, that Sir Hargrave is secretly plotting to take away his life, and cautions him to guard against the secret machinations of this desperate man . . . . . 204—212

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THE HISTORY

OF

SIR CHARLES GRANDISON, BART.

—o—

LETTER I.

Miss Lucy Selby to Miss Harriet Byron.

Ashby-Cannons, January 10.

YOUR resolution to accompany Mrs. Reeves to London, has greatly alarmed your three lovers: and two of them, at least, will let you know that it has. Such a lovely girl as my Harriet, must expect to be more accountable for her steps than one less excellent and less attractive.

Mr. Greville, in his usual resolute way, threatens to follow you to London; and there, he says, he will watch the motions of every man who approaches you; and, if he find reason for it, will *early* let such man know *his* pretensions, and the danger he may run into if he pretend to be his competitor. But let me not do him injustice; though he talks of a rival thus harshly, he speaks of you more highly than man ever spoke of woman. Angel and goddess are phrases you have been used to from him; and though spoken in his humorous way, yet I am sure he most sincerely admires you.

Mr. Fenwick, in a less determined manner, declares, that he will follow you to town, if you stay there above *one* fortnight.

The gentle Orme sighs his apprehensions, and wishes you

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would change your purpose. Though hopeless, he says, it is some pleasure to him that he can think himself in the same county with you; and much more, that he can tread in your footsteps to and from church every Sunday, and behold you there. He wonders how your grandmamma, your aunt, your uncle, can spare you. Your cousins Reeves surely, he says, are very happy in their influences over us all.

Each of the gentlemen is afraid, that, by increasing the number of your admirers, you will increase his difficulties: but what is that to them, I asked, when they already know, that you are not inclined to favour any of the three?

If you hold your resolution, and my cousins Reeves their time of setting out, pray let me know, and I will attend you at my uncle Selby's, to wish you a good journey, much pleasure in town, and a return with a safe and sound heart. My sister, who, poor dear girl, continues extremely weak and low, will spare me for a purpose so indispensable. I will not have you come to *us*. I know it would grieve you to see her in the way she is in. You too much take to heart the infirmities of your friends which you cannot cure; and as your grandmamma lives upon your smiles, and you rejoice all your friends by your cheerfulness, it would be cruel to make you sad.

Mr. Greville has just left us. He dropt in upon us as we were going to dinner. My grandmother Selby, you know, is always pleased with his rattling. She prevailed on him to alight, and sit down with us. All his talk was of you. He repeated his former *threatenings* (as I called them to him) on your going to town. After dinner, he read us a letter from Lady Frampton relating to you. He read us also some passages from the copy of his answer, with design, I believe, that I should ask him to leave it behind him. He is a vain creature, you know, and seemed fond of what he had written. I *did* ask him. He pretended to make a scruple of *your* seeing; but it was a faint one. However, he called for pen and ink; and when it was brought him, scratched over two passages, and that with so many little flourishes (as you will see), that he thought they could not be read. But the ink I furnished him with happening to

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be paler than his, you will find he was not cunning enough. I promised to return it.

Send me a line by the bearer, to tell me if your resolution holds as to the day.

Adieu, my dearest Harriet. May angels protect and guide you, whithersoever you go!

LUCY SELBY.

—o—

LETTER II.

Mr. Greville to Lady Frampton.

[Enclosed in the preceding.]

Northampton, January 6.

YOUR ladyship demands a description of the person of the celebrated Miss Byron in our neighbourhood; and to know, whether, as report tells you, love has listed me in the number of her particular admirers.—*Particular* admirers you well distinguish, since every one who beholds her admires her.

Your ladyship confines your inquiries to her *person*, you tell me; and you own that women are much more solicitous about the beauties of *that*, than of the *mind*. Perhaps it may be so; and that their envy is much sooner excited by the one than by the other. But who, madam, can describe the person of Miss Harriet Byron, and her person only; animated as every feature is by a mind that bespeaks all human excellence, and dignifies her in every air, in every look, in every motion?

No man living has a greater passion for beauty than I have. Till I knew Miss Byron, I was one of those who regarded nothing else in the sex. Indeed, I considered all intellectual attainments as either useless or impertinent in women. Your ladyship knows what were my free notions on this head, and has rebuked me for them. A wise, a learned lady, I considered as a very unnatural character. I wanted women to be all love, and nothing else. A *very* little prudence allowed I to enter into their composition; just enough to distinguish the man of sense from the fool;

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and that for my *own* sake. You know I have vanity, madam: but lovely as Miss Byron's person is, I defy the greatest sensualist on earth not to admire her mind more than her person. What a triumph would the devil have, as I have often thought, when I have stood contemplating her perfections, especially at church, were he able to raise up a man that could lower this angel into woman?—Pardon me!—Your ladyship knows my mad way of saying everything that rises to my thoughts.

Sweetness of temper must make plain features glow: what an effect must it then have upon fine ones? Never *was* there a sweeter-tempered woman. Indeed from sixteen to twenty, all the sex (kept in humour by their hopes, and by their attractions) are said to be good-tempered; but she is remarkably so. She is just turned of twenty, but looks not more than seventeen. Her beauty, hardly yet in its full blow, will last longer, I imagine, than in an earlier blossom. Yet the prudence visible in her whole aspect, gave her a distinction, even at twelve, that promised what she would be at a riper age.

Yet with all this reigning good-nature visible in her face and manner, there is such a native dignity in all she says, in all she does (though mingled with a frankness that shows her mind's superiority to the minds of almost all other women), that it damps and suppresses, in the most audacious, all imaginations of bold familiarity.

I know not, by my soul, how she does this neither: yet so it is. She jests; she rallies: but I cannot rally her again. Love, it is said, dignifies the adored object. Perhaps it is *that* which awes me.

And now will your ladyship doubt of an affirmative answer to your second question, Whether love has listed me in the number of her particular admirers?

He has: and the devil take me if I can help myself: and yet I have no encouragement—nor anybody else; that's my consolation. Fenwick is deeper in, if possible, than I. We had at our first acquaintance, as you have heard, a tilting-bout on the occasion: but we are sworn friends now; each having agreed to try his fortune by patience and perseverance; and being assured that the one has no more of her

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favour to boast of, than the other.* 'We have indeed blus-
'tered away between us half a score more of her admirers.
'Poor whining Orme, however, perseveres. But of him we
'make no account: he has a watery head; and though he
'finds a way, by his sister, who visits at Mr. Selby's, and is
'much esteemed there, to let Miss Byron know his passion
'for her, notwithstanding the negative he has received; yet
'doubt we not that she is safe from a flame that he will
'quench with his tears, before it can rise to a head to
'disturb us.

'You ladies love men should whine after you: but never
'yet did I find, that where a blustering fellow was a com-
'petitor, the lady married the milksop.'

But let me in this particular do Miss Byron justice: how she manages it, I can't tell; but she is courteous to all; nor could ever any man charge her either with pride or cruelty. All I fear, is, that she has such an equality in her temper, that she can hardly find room in her heart for a particular love: nor will, till she meets with one whose mind is near as faultless as her own, and the general tenor of whose life and actions calls upon her discretion to give her *leave* to love.

'This apprehension I owe to a conversation I had with her
'grandmother Shirley; a lady that is an ornament to old
'age; and who hinted to me, that her grand-daughter had
'exceptions both to Fenwick and me, on the score of a *few*
'indulgences that perhaps have been *too* public; but which
'all men of fashion and spirit give themselves, and all
'women, but *this*, allow of, or hate not men the worse for.
'But then what is her objection to Orme? He is a
'sober dog.'

She was but eight years old when her mother died. She also was an excellent woman. Her death was brought on by grief for that of her husband; which happened but six months before—a rare instance!

The grandmother and aunt, to whom the girl is dutiful to a proverb, will not interfere with her choice. If *they* are applied to for their interest, the answer is constantly this:

* The passages in this letter thus marked ('), are those which in the preceding one are said to be scratched out; but yet were legible by holding up the letter to the light.

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The approbation of their Harriet must first be gained, and then their consent is ready.

There is a Mr. Deane, a man of an excellent character for a lawyer; but indeed he left off practice on coming into possession of a handsome estate. He was the girl's godfather. He is allowed to have great influence over them all. Harriet calls him papa. To him I have applied: but his answer is the very same: his *daughter* Harriet must choose for herself: all motions of this kind must come first from her.

And ought *I* to despair of succeeding with the girl *herself?* I, her Greville; not contemptible in person; an air—free and easy, at *least:* having a good estate in possession; fine expectances besides; dressing well, singing well, dancing well, and blest with a moderate share of confidence: which makes other women think me a clever fellow: she a girl of twenty; her fortune between ten and fifteen thousand pounds only; for her father's considerable estate, on his demise, for want of male heirs, went with the name; her grandmother's jointure not more than five hundred pounds a year.—And what though her uncle Selby has no children, and loves her, yet has he nephews and nieces of his own, whom he also loves; for this Harriet is his wife's niece.

I will not *despair.* If resolution, if perseverance, will do, and if she be a woman, she shall be mine—and so I have told her aunt Selby, and her uncle too; and so I have told Miss Lucy Selby, her cousin, as she calls her, who is highly and deservedly in her favour; and so indeed have I more than once told the girl herself.

But now to the description of her person—Let me die, if I know where to begin. She is all over loveliness. Does not everybody else who has seen her tell you so? Her stature; shall I begin with her stature? She cannot be said to be tall; but yet is something above the middling. Her shape—but what care I for her shape? I, who hope to love her still more, though possession may make me admire her less, when she has not that to boast of? We young fellows, who have been abroad, are above regarding English shapes, and prefer to them the French negligence. By the way, I think the foreign ladies in the right, that they aim not at what they cannot attain. Whether *we* are so much in the

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right to come into their taste, is another thing. But be this as it will, there is so much ease and dignity in the person, in the dress, and in every air and motion, of Miss Harriet Byron, that fine shapes will ever be in fashion where she is, be either native or foreigner the judge.

Her complexion is admirably fair and clear. I have sat admiring her complexion, till I have imagined I have seen the life-blood flowing with equal course through her translucent veins.

Her forehead, so nobly free and open, shows dignity and modesty, and strikes into one a kind of *awe*, singly contemplated, that (from the *delight* which accompanies the *awe*) I know not how to describe. Every single feature, in short, will bear the nicest examination; and her whole face, and her neck, so admirably set on her finely proportioned shoulders—let me perish, if, taking her altogether, I do not hold her to be the most unexceptionable beauty I ever beheld. But what still is her *particular* excellence, and distinguishes her from all other *English* women (for it must be acknowledged to be a characteristic of the French women of quality), is, the grace which that people call *physiognomy*, and we may call *expression:* had *not* her features and her complexion been so fine as they are, that grace alone, that soul shining out in her lovely aspect, joined with the ease and gracefulness of her motion, would have made her as many admirers as beholders.

After this, shall I descend to a more particular description?—I will.

Her cheek—I never *saw* a cheek so beautifully turned, illustrated as it is by a charming carmine flush, which denotes sound health. A most bewitching dimple takes place in each when she smiles; and she has so much reason to be pleased with herself, and with all about her (for she is the idol of her relations), that I believe from infancy she never frowned; nor can a frown, it is my opinion, sit upon her face for a minute. Would to Heaven I were considerable enough with her to prove the contrary!

Her mouth—there never *was* so lovely a mouth. But no wonder; since such rosy lips, and such ivory and even teeth, must give beauty to a mouth less charming than hers.

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Her nose adds dignity to her other features.

Her chin is sweetly turned, and almost imperceptibly dimpled.

Her eyes;—aye, madam, her eyes!—Good Heaven! what a lustre! yet not a fierce, but a mild lustre. How have I despised the romancing poets for their unnatural descriptions of the eyes of their heroines! But I have thought those descriptions, though absurd enough in conscience, less absurd (allowing something for poetical licence), ever since I beheld those of Miss Harriet Byron.

Her hair is a real and unlaboured ornament to her. All natural its curls: art has no share in the lustre it gives to her other beauties.

I mentioned her neck—here I dare not trust myself—Inimitable creature! All-attracting loveliness!

Her arm—your ladyship knows my passion for a delicate arm—by my soul, madam, your own does not exceed it.

Her hands are extremely fine. Such fingers: and they accustomed to the pen, to the needle, to the harpsichord; excelling in all—O madam! women *have* souls. I now am convinced they have. I dare own to your ladyship, that once I doubted it, on a supposition that they were given us for temporary purposes only.—And have I not seen her dance! have I not heard her sing!—But indeed, mind and person, she is all harmony.

Then for reading, for acquired knowledge, what lady so young—but you know the character of her grandfather Shirley. He was a man of universal learning, and, from his public employments abroad, as polite as learned. This girl, from seven years of age, when he came to settle in England, to fourteen, when she lost him, was his delight: and her education and instruction the amusement of his vacant hours. This is the period, he used to say, in which the foundations of all female goodness are to be laid, since so soon after fourteen they leap into women. The dead languages he aimed not to teach her, lest he should overload her young mind: but in the Italian and French he made her an adept.

Nor were the advantages common ones which she received from his lady, her grandmother, and from her aunt Selby,

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her father's sister, a woman of equal worthiness. Her grandmother particularly is one of the most pious, yet most cheerful, of women. She will not permit her daughter Byron, she says, to live with her, for *both* their sakes—for the *girl's* sake. Because there is a greater resort of company at Mr. Selby's, than at Shirley Manor; and she is afraid as her grandchild has a serious turn, that *her* own contemplative life may make her more grave than she wishes so young a woman to be. Youth, she says, is the season for cheerfulness—For *her own* sake, because she looks upon her Harriet's company as a cordial too rich to be always at hand; and when she has a mind to regale, she will either send for her, fetch her, or visit her at Mr. Selby's. One of her letters to Mrs. Selby I once saw. It ran thus:—'You must 'spare me my Harriet. I am in pain. My spirits are not 'high. I would not have the undecayed mind yield, for 'want of using the means, to the decaying body. *One* 'happy day with our child, the true child of the united 'minds of her late excellent parents, will, I hope, effect the 'cure. If it do not, you must spare her to me *two*.'

Did I not tell you, madam, that it was very difficult to describe the person *only* of this admirable young lady—But I stop here. A horrid apprehension comes across me!—how do I know but I am praising another man's *future* wife, and not my own? Here is a cousin of hers, a Mrs. Reeves, a fine lady from London, come down under the cursed influence of my evil stars, to carry this Harriet away with her into the gay world. Woman! woman!—I beg your ladyship's pardon; but what angel of twenty is proof against vanity? The first hour she appears, she will be a toast; stars and titles will crowd about her; and who knows how far a paltry coronet may dazzle *her* who deserves an imperial crown? But woe to the man, whoever he be, whose pretensions dare to interfere (and have any assurance of success) with those of

Your Ladyship's

Most obedient and faithful Servant,

JOHN GREVILLE.

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LETTER III.

Miss Harriet Byron to Miss Lucy Selby.

Selby House, January 16.

I RETURN you inclosed, my Lucy, Mr. Greville's strange letter. As you asked him for it, he will have no doubt but you showed it to me. It is better, therefore, if he make inquiry whether you did or not, to own it. In this case he will be curious to know my sentiments upon it. He is sensible that my whole heart is open to you.

Tell him, if you think proper, in so many words, that I am far more displeased with him for his impetuosity, than gratified by his flattery.

Tell him, I think it very hard, that, when my nearest relations leave me so generously to my liberty, a man to whom I never gave cause to treat me with disrespect, should take upon himself to threaten and control me.

Ask him, what are his pretences for following me to London, or elsewhere.

If I had not had reasons *before* to avoid a more than neighbourly civility to him, he has now furnished me with very strong ones. The threatening lover must certainly make a tyrant husband. Don't you think so, Lucy?—But make not supposals of lover or husband to him: these bold men will turn shadows into substance in their own favour.

A woman who is so much exalted above what she *can* deserve, has reason to be terrified, were she to marry the complimenter (even *could* she suppose him so blinded by his passion as not to be absolutely insincere), to think of the height she must fall from in his opinion, when she has put it in his power to treat her but as what she is.

Indeed I both *despise* and *fear* a very high complimenter. —*Despise* him for his designing flattery, supposing him not to believe himself; or, if he *mean* what he says, for his injudiciousness. I *fear* him, lest he should (as in the former case he must hope) be able to raise a vanity in me, that would sink me beneath his meanness, and give him cause to

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triumph over my folly at the very time that I am full of my own wisdom.

High-strained compliments, in short, always pull me down; always make me shrink into *myself*. Have I not some vanity to guard against? I have no doubt but Mr. Greville wished I should see this letter: and this gives me some little indignation against *myself*; for does it not look as if, from some faults in my conduct, Mr. Greville had formed hopes of succeeding by treating me like a fool?

I hope these gentlemen will not follow me to town, as they threaten. If they do, I will not see them, if I can any way avoid it. Yet, for me to appear to *them* solicitous on this head, or to desire them *not* to go, will be in some measure to lay myself under an obligation to their acquiescence. It is not therefore for me to hope to influence them in this matter, since they expect too much in return for it from me; and since they will be ready to found a merit in their passion even for disobliging me.

I cannot bear, however, to think of their dangling after me wherever I go. These men, my dear, were we to give them importance with us, would be greater infringers of our natural freedom than the most severe parents; and for *their own sakes:* whereas parents, if ever so despotic (if not unnatural ones indeed), mean *solely our good,* though headstrong girls do not always think so. Yet such, even *such,* can be teased out of their wills, at least out of their duty, by the men who style themselves *lovers,* when they are invincible to all the entreaties and commands of their *parents.*

Oh that the next eight or ten years of my life, if I find not in the interim a man on whom my whole undivided heart can fix, were happily over! *As* happily as the last alike important four years! To be able to look down from the *elevation* of thirty years, my principles fixed, and to have no capital folly to reproach myself with, what a happiness would that be!

My cousin Reeves's time of setting out holds; the indulgence of my dearest friends continues; and my resolution holds. But I will see my Nancy before I set out. What! shall I enter upon a party of pleasure, and leave in my heart room to reflect, in the midst of it, that there is a dear suffer-

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ing friend who had reason to think I was afraid of giving myself pain, when I might, by the balm of true love and friendly soothings, administer comfort to her wounded heart? —No, my Lucy, believe me, if I have not generosity enough I have *selfishness* enough, to make me avoid a sting so severe as *this* would be to your

HARRIET BYRON.

—o—

LETTER IV.

Miss Byron to Miss Selby.

Grosvenor Street, Tuesday, January 24.

WE are just arrived. We had a very agreeable journey. I need not tell you that Mr. Greville and Mr. Fenwick attended us to our first baiting, and had a genteel dinner ready provided for us: the gentlemen will tell you this, and all particulars.

They both renewed their menaces of following me to London, if I staid above one month. They were so good as to stretch their fortnight to a month.

Mr. Fenwick, in very pathetic terms, as he found an opportunity to engage me alone for a few minutes, besought me to *love* him. Mr. Greville was as earnest with me to declare that I *hated* him. Such a declaration, he said, was all he at present wished for. It was strange, he told me, that he neither could prevail on me to encourage his love, nor to declare my hatred. He is a whimsical creature.

I rallied him with my usual freedom; and told him, that if there were one person in the world that I was capable of hating, I could make the less scruple to oblige *him*. He thanked me for that.

The two gentlemen would fain have proceeded farther: but as they are never out of their way, I dare say they would have gone to London; and there have dangled on till we should not have got rid of them, for my whole time of being in town.

I was very gravely earnest with them to leave us, when we stept into the coach in order to proceed. Fenwick, you dog, said Mr. Greville, we *must* return; Miss Byron looks

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grave. Gravity and a rising colour in the finest face in the world, indicate as much as the frowns of other beauties. And in the most respectful manner they both took leave of me; insisting, however, on my hand, and that I would wish them well.

I gave each my hand; I wish you very well, gentlemen, said I: and I am obliged to your civility in seeing me so far on my journey: especially as you are so kind as to leave me here.

Why, dear madam, did you not spare your *especially?* said Mr. Greville.—Come, Fenwick, let us retire and lay our two loggerheads together, and live over again the past hour, and then hang ourselves.

Poor Mr. Orme! The coach, at our first setting out, passed by his park-gate, you know. There was he—on the very ridge of the highway. I saw him not till it was near him. He bowed to the very ground, with *such* an air of disconsolateness!—Poor Mr. Orme! I wished to have said one word to him, when we had passed him: but the coach flew—Why did the coach fly?—But I waved my hand, and leaned out of the coach as far as I could, and bowed to him.

O Miss Byron! said Mrs. Reeves (so said Mr. Reeves), Mr. Orme is the happy man. Did I think as you do, said I, I should not be so desirous to have spoken to him: but, methinks, I should have been glad to have once said, Adieu, Mr. Orme; for Mr. Orme is a good man.

But, Lucy, my heart was softened at parting with my dear relations and friends; and when the heart is softened light impressions will go deep.

My cousins' house is suitable to their fortune: very handsome, and furnished in taste. Mrs. Reeves, knowing well what a scribbler I am, and am expected to be, has provided me with pen, ink, and paper in abundance. She readily allowed me to take early possession of my apartment, that I might pay punctual obedience to the commands of all my friends on setting out. These, you know, were to write in the first hour of my arrival: and it was allowed to be to you, my dear. But, writing thus early, what can have occurred?

My apartment is extremely elegant. A well-furnished book-case is, however, to me the most attracting ornament

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in it—Pardon me, dear pen and ink! I must not prefer anything to you, by whose means I hope to spend some part of every day at Selby House; and even at this distance amuse with my prattle those friends that are always so partial to it.

And now, my dear, my revered grandmamma, I ask your blessing—yours, my ever-indulgent aunt Selby—and yours, my honoured and equally beloved uncle Selby. Who knows but you will now in absence take less delight in teasing your ever-dutiful Harriet? But yet I unbespeak not my monitor.

Continue to love me, my Lucy, as I shall endeavour to deserve your love: and let me know how our dear Nancy does.

My heart bleeds for her. I should have held myself utterly inexcusable, had I accepted of your kindly intended dispensation, and come to town for three whole months, without repeating to her by word of mouth, my love and my sympathizing concern for her. What merit does her patience add to her other merits! How has her calamity endeared her to me! If ever I shall be heavily afflicted, God give me her amiable, her almost meritorious patience in sufferings!

To my cousins Holles, and all my other relations, friends, companions, make the affectionate compliments of your

HARRIET BYRON.

—o—

LETTER V.

Miss Byron to Miss Selby.

January 25.

You rejoice me, my dear, in the hopes which you tell me Dr. Mitchell from London gives you in relation to our Nancy. May our incessant prayers for the restoration of her health be answered!

Three things my aunt Selby, and you, in the name of every one of my friends, enjoined me at parting. The *first*, to write often, *very* often, were *your* words. This injunction was not needful: my heart is with you; and the good news

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you give me of my grandmamma's health and of our Nancy, enlarges that heart. The *second*, to give you a description of the persons and characters of the people I am likely to be conversant with in this great town. And, *thirdly*, besides the general account which you all expected from me of the visits I made and received, you enjoined me to acquaint you with the very *beginnings* of every address (and even of every *silent and respectful* distinction, were *your* words), that the girl whom you all so greatly favour, might receive on this excursion to town.

Don't you remember what my uncle Selby answered to this?—*I* do: and will repeat it, to shew that his correcting cautions shall not be forgotten.

The vanity of the sex, said he, will not suffer anything of this sort to escape our Harriet. Women, continued he, make themselves so cheap at the public places in and about town, that new faces are more inquired after, than even fine faces constantly seen. Harriet has an honest artless bloom in her cheeks; she may attract notice as a novice: but wherefore do you fill her head with an expectation of conquests? Women, added he, offer themselves at every public place, in rows, as at a market. Because three or four silly fellows here in the country (like people at an auction, who raise the price upon each other above its value) have bid for her, you think she will not be able to set her foot out of doors, without increasing the number of her followers.

And then my uncle would have it, that my head would be unable to bear the *consequence* which the partiality of my other friends gave me.

It is true, my Lucy, that we young women are too apt to be pleased with the admiration *pretended* for us by the other sex. But I have always endeavoured to keep down any foolish pride of this sort, by such considerations as these:—That flattery is the vice of men: that they seek to raise us in order to lower us, and in the end to exalt themselves on the ruins of the pride they either hope to find, or inspire: that humility, as it shines brightest in a high condition, best becomes a flattered woman of all women; that she who is puffed up by the praises of men, on the supposed advantages of person, answers *their end* upon her; and seems

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to own, that she thinks it a principal part of *hers*, to be admired by them: and what can give more importance to them, and less to herself, than this? For have not women souls as well as men, and souls as capable of the noblest attainments, as theirs? Shall they not, therefore, be most solicitous to cultivate the beauties of the mind, and to make those of person but of inferior consideration? The bloom of beauty holds but a very few years; and shall not a woman aim to make herself mistress of those perfections that will dignify her advanced age? and then may she be as wise, as venerable—as my grandmamma. *She* is an example for us, my dear: who is so much respected, who is so much beloved, both by old and young, as my grandmamma Shirley?

In pursuance of the second injunction, I will now describe some young ladies and gentlemen, who paid my cousins their compliments on their arrival in town.

Miss Allestree, daughter of Sir John Allestree, was one. She is very pretty, and very genteel, easy, and free. I believe I shall love her.

Miss Bramber was the second. Not so pretty as Miss Allestree; but agreeable in her person and air. A little too talkative, I think.

It was one of my grandfather's rules to me, not impertinently to start subjects, as if I would make an ostentation of knowledge; or if I were fond of indulging a talking humour: but frankness and complaisance required, he used to say, that we women should unlock our bosoms, when we were called upon, and were expected to give our sentiments upon any subject.

Miss Bramber was *eager* to talk. She seemed, even when silent, to look as if she was studying for something to say, although she had exhausted two or three subjects. This charge of volubility, I am the rather inclined to fix upon her, as neither Mr. nor Mrs. Reeves took notice to me of it, as a thing extraordinary; which, probably, they would have done, if she had exceeded her usual way. And yet, perhaps, the joy of seeing her newly arrived friends might have opened her lips. If so, your pardon, sweet Miss Bramber!

Miss Sally, her younger sister, is very amiable and very

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modest; a little kept down, and it seems, by the vivacity of her elder sister; between whose ages there are about six or seven years: so that Miss Bramber seems to regard her sister as one whom she is willing to remember as the girl she was two or three years ago; for Miss Sally is not above seventeen.

What confirmed me in this, was, that the younger lady was a good deal more free when her sister was withdrawn, than when she was present; and again pursed-up her really pretty mouth when she returned: and her sister addressed her always by the word *child*, with an air of eldership; while the other called her *sister*, with a look of observance.

These were the ladies.

The two gentlemen who came with them, were, Mr. Barnet, a nephew of Lady Allestree, and Mr. Somner.

Mr. Somner is a young gentleman lately married; very affected, and very opinionated. I told Mrs. Reeves, after he was gone, that I believed he was a dear lover of his person; and she owned he was. Yet had he no great reason for it. It is far from extraordinary; though he was very gaily dressed. His wife, it seems, was a young widow of great fortune; and till she gave him consequence by falling in love with him, he was thought to be a modest, good sort of young man; one that had not discovered any more perfections in himself, than other people beheld in him; and this gave her an excuse for liking him. But now he is loquacious, forward, bold, thinks meanly of the sex; and, what is worse, not the higher of the lady, for the preference she has given him.

This gentleman took great notice of me; and yet in such a way, as to have me think, that the approbation of so excellent a judge as himself did me no small honour.

Mr. Barnet is a young man, that I imagine will be always young. At first I thought him *only* a fop. He affected to say some things, that, though trite, were sententious, and carried with them the air of observation. There is some degree of merit in having such a memory, as will help a person to repeat and apply other men's wit with tolerable propriety. But when he attempted to walk alone, he said things that it was impossible a man of common sense could say.

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I pronounce therefore boldly about *him:* yet by his outward appearance he may pass for one of your pretty fellows; for he dresses very gaily. Indeed, if he has any taste, it is in dress; and this he has found out; for he talked of little else, when he *led* the talk; and boasted of several parts of *his.* What finished him with me, was, that as often as the conversation seemed to take a serious turn, he arose from his seat, and hummed an Italian air; of which, however, he knew nothing: but the sound of his own voice seemed to please him.

This fine gentleman recollected some high-flown compliments, and applying them to me, looked as if he expected I should value myself upon them.

No wonder that men in general think meanly of us women, if they believe we have ears to hear, and folly to be pleased with, the frothy things that pass under the name of *compliments* from such *random-shooters* as these.

Miss Stevens paid us a visit this afternoon. She is daughter of Colonel Stevens, a very worthy man. She appears sensible and unaffected; has read, my cousin says, a good deal, and yet takes no pride in shewing it.

Miss Darlington came with her. They are related. This young lady has, I find, a pretty taste in poetry. Mrs. Reeves prevailed on her to shew us three of her performances. And now, as it was with some reluctance that she shewed them, is it fair to say anything about them? I say it only to you, my friends.—One was *on the parting of two lovers;* very sensible; and so tender, that it shewed the fair writer knew how to describe the pangs that may be innocently allowed to arise on such an occasion.—One *on the morning dawn,* and *sun-rise:* a subject that gave credit to herself; for she is, it seems, a very early riser. I petitioned for a copy of this, for the sake of two or three of my dear cousins, as well as to confirm my own practice; but I was modestly refused.—The third was on the death of a favourite linnet; a little too pathetic for the occasion; since, were Miss Darlington to have lost her best and dearest friend, I imagine that she had in this piece, which is pretty long, exhausted the subject; and must borrow from it some of the images which she introduces to heighten her distress for the loss of the little

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songster. It is a very difficult matter, I believe, for young persons of genius to rein in their imaginations. A great flow of spirits, and great store of images crowding in upon them, carry them too frequently above their subject; and they are apt rather to say all that *may* be said on their favourite topics, than what is *proper* to be said. But it is a pretty piece, however.

—o—

Thursday Morning.

Lady Betty Williams supped with us the same evening. She is an agreeable woman, the widow of a very worthy man, a near relation of Mr. Reeves. She has a great and just regard for my cousin, and consults him in all affairs of importance. She seems to be turned of forty; has a son and a daughter; but they are both abroad for education.

It hurt me to hear her declare, that she cared not for the trouble of education; and that she had this pleasure, which girls brought up at home seldom give their mothers; that she and Miss Williams always saw each other, and always parted, as lovers.

Surely there must be some fault either in the temper of the mother, or in the behaviour of the daughter; and if so, I doubt it will not be amended by seeing each other but seldom. Do not lovers thus cheat and impose upon one another?

The young gentleman is about seventeen; his sister about fifteen; and as I understand she is a very lively, and, 'tis feared, a forward girl, shall we wonder, if in a few years' time she should make such a choice for her husband as Lady Betty would least of all choose for a son-in-law? What influence can a mother expect to have over a daughter from whom she so voluntarily estranges herself? and from whose example the daughter can receive only hearsay benefits?

But, after all, methinks I hear my correcting uncle ask, May not Lady Betty have *better* reasons for her conduct in this particular, than she gave you?—She may, my uncle, and I hope she has: but I wish she had condescended to give those better reasons, since she gave any; and then you had not been troubled with the impertinent remarks of your saucy kinswoman.

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Lady Betty was so kind as to take great notice of me. She desired to be one in every party of pleasure that I am to be engaged in. Persons who were often at public places, she observed, took as much delight in accompanying strangers to them, as if they were their own. The apt comparisons, she said; the new remarks; the pretty wonder; the agreeable passions excited in such, on the occasion; always gave her high entertainment: and she was sure, from the observation of *such* a young lady, civilly bowing to me, she should be equally delighted and improved. I bowed in silence. I love not to make disqualifying speeches; by such we seem to intimate that we believe the complimenter to be in earnest, or, perhaps, that we think the compliment our due, and want to hear it either repeated or confirmed; and yet, possibly, we have not that pretty confusion, and those transient blushes, ready, which Mr. Greville archly says are always to be at hand when we affect to disclaim the praises given us.

Lady Betty was so good as to stop there; though the muscles of her agreeable face shewed a polite promptitude, had I, by disclaiming her compliments, provoked them to perform their office.

Am I not a saucy creature?

I know I am. But I dislike not Lady Betty, for all that.

I am to be carried by her to a masquerade, to a ridotto; when the season comes, to Ranelagh and Vauxhall: in the meantime, to balls, routs, drums, and so forth; and, to qualify me for these latter, I am to be taught all the fashionable games. Did my dear grandmamma, twenty or thirty years ago, think she should live to be told, that to the dancing-master, the singing or music-master, the high mode would require the gaming-master to be added for the completing of the female education?

Lady Betty will kindly take the lead in all these diversions.

And now, Lucy, will you not repeat your wishes, that I return to you with a sound heart? And are you not afraid that I should become a modern fine lady? As to the latter fear, I will tell you *when* you shall suspect me—If you find that I prefer the highest of these entertainments, or the Opera itself, well as I love music, to a good play of our

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favourite Shakespeare, then, my Lucy, let your heart ache for your Harriet: then, be apprehensive that she is laid hold on by levity; that she is captivated by the eye and the ear; that her heart is infected by the modern taste; and that she will carry down with her an appetite to pernicious gaming; and, in order to support her extravagance, will think of punishing some honest man in marriage.

James has signified to Sally his wishes to be allowed to return to Selby House. I have not therefore bought him the new liveries I designed for him on coming to town. I cannot bear an uncheerful brow in a servant; and he owning to me, on my talking to him, his desire to return, I have promised that he shall, as soon as Mr. Reeves has provided me with another servant.—Silly fellow! But I hope my aunt will not dismiss him upon it. The servant I may hire may not care to go into the country perhaps, or may not so behave, as that I should choose to take him down with me. And James is honest; and his mother would break her heart, if he should be dismissed our service.

Several servants have already offered themselves; but, as I think people are answerable for the character of such as they choose for their domestics, I find no small difficulty in fixing. I am not of the mind of that great man, whose good-natured reason for sometimes preferring men no way deserving, was, that he loved to be a friend to those whom no other person would befriend. This was carrying his goodness very far (if he made it not an excuse for himself, for having promoted a man who *proved* bad *afterwards*, rather than as supposing him to be so at the *time*); since else, he seemed not to consider, that every bad man he promoted ran away with the reward due to a better.

Mr. and Mrs. Reeves are so kind to me, and their servants are so ready to oblige me, that I shall not be very uneasy, if I cannot soon get one to my mind. Only if I could fix on such a one, and if my grandmamma's Oliver should leave her, as she supposes he will, now he has married Ellen, as soon as a good inn offers, James may supply Oliver's place, and the new servant may continue mine instead of James.

And now that I have gone so low, don't you wish me to put an end to this letter?—I believe you do.

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Well then, with duty and love ever remembered where so justly due, believe me to be, my dear Lucy,

Your truly affectionate

HARRIET BYRON.

I will write separately to what you say of Mr. Greville, Mr. Fenwick, and Miss Orme; yet hope to be time enough for the post.

—o—

LETTER VI.

Miss Byron to Miss Selby.

Saturday, January 28.

As to what you say of Mr. Greville's concern on my absence (and, I think, with a little too much feeling for him), and of his declaring himself unable to live without seeing me; I have but one fear about it; which is, that he is forming a pretence, from his *violent* love, to come up after me: and if he does, I will not see him, if I can help it.

And do you indeed believe him to be so much in love? By your seriousness on the occasion, you seem to think he is. Oh, my Lucy! what a good heart you have! And did he not weep when he told you so? Did he not turn his head away, and pull out his handkerchief?—Oh, these dissemblers! The hyæna, my dear, was a *male* devourer. The men, in malice, and to extenuate their own guilt, made the creature a *female*. And yet there may be male and female of this species of monsters. But as women have more to lose with regard to reputation than men, the male hyæna must be infinitely the more dangerous creature of the two; since he will come to us, even into our very houses, fawning, cringing, weeping, licking our hands; while the den of the female is by the highway-side, and wretched youths must enter into it, to put it into her power to devour them.

Let me tell you, my dear, that if there be an artful man in England, with regard to us women (artful equally in his free speaking, and in his sycophancies), Mr. Greville is the man; and he *intends* to be so too, and values himself upon

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his art. Does he not as boldly as constantly insinuate, that flattery is dearer to a woman than her food? yet who so gross a flatterer as himself, when the humour is upon him! and yet at times he wants to build up a merit for sincerity or plain dealing, by saying free things.

It is not difficult, my dear, to find out these men, were we earnest to detect them. Their chief strength lies in our weakness. But however weak we are, I think we should not add to the triumph of those who make our weakness the general subject of their satire. We should not prove the justice of their ridicule by our own indiscretions. But the traitor is within us. If we guard against ourselves, we may bid defiance to all the arts of man.

You know that my great objection to Mr. Greville is for his immoralities. A man of free principles, shewn by practices as free, can hardly make a tender husband, were a woman able to get over considerations that she ought *not* to get over. Who shall trust for the performance of his *second* duties, the man who avoidedly despises his *first*? Mr. Greville had a good education: he must have taken *pains* to render vain the pious precepts of his worthy father: and still more to make a jest of them.

Three of his women we have heard of, besides her whom he brought with him from Wales. You know he has only affected to appear decent since he has cast his eyes upon me. The man, my dear, must be an abandoned man, and must have a very hard heart, who can pass from woman to woman, without any remorse for a former, whom, as may be supposed, he has by the most solemn vows seduced. And whose leavings is it, my dear, that a virtuous woman takes, who marries a profligate?

Is it not reported that his Welshwoman, to whom, at parting, he gave not sufficient for a twelvemonth's scanty subsistence, is now upon the town? Vile man! he thinks it to his credit, I have heard, to own it a seduction, and that she was not a vicious creature till he made her so.

One only merit has Mr. Greville to plead in this black transaction: it is, that he has, by his whole conduct in it, added a warning to our sex. And shall I, despising the warning, marry a man, who, specious as he is in his

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temper, and lively in his conversation, has shown so bad a nature?

His fortune, as you say, is great. The more inexcusable, therefore, is he for his niggardliness to his Welshwoman. On his fortune he presumes: it will procure him a too easy forgiveness from others of our sex: but fortune without merit will never do with me, were the man a prince.

You say, that if a woman resolves not to marry till she finds herself addressed by a man of strict virtue, she must be for ever single. If this be true, what wicked creatures are men! What a dreadful abuse of passions, given them for the noblest purposes, are they guilty of!

I have a very high notion of the marriage state. I remember what my uncle once averred: that a woman out of wedlock is half useless to the end of her being. How, indeed, do the duties of a good wife, of a good mother, and a worthy matron, well performed, dignify a woman! Let my aunt Selby's example, in her enlarged sphere, set against that of any single woman of like years, moving in her narrow circle, testify the truth of the observation. My grandfather used to say, that families are little communities; that there are but few solid friendships out of them; and that they help to make up worthily, and to secure the great community, of which they are so many miniatures.

But yet it is my opinion, and I hope that I never by my practice shall discredit it, that a woman who with her eyes open marries a profligate man, had, generally, much better remain single all her life; since it is very likely, that by such a step she defeats, as to herself, all the good ends of society. What a dreadful, what a *presumptuous* risk runs she, who marries a wicked man, even hoping to reclaim him, when she cannot be sure of keeping her own principles!—'Be not deceived: evil communication corrupts good man-'ners;' is a caution truly apostolical.

The text you mention of the *unbelieving husband* being converted by the *believing wife*, respects, as I take it, the first ages of Christianity; and is an instruction to the converted wife to let her unconverted husband see in her behaviour to him, 'while he beheld her chaste conversation, coupled 'with fear,' the efficacy upon her own heart of the excellent

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doctrines she had embraced. It could not have in view the woman who, *being single*, chose a *pagan husband* in hopes of *converting him*. Nor can it give encouragement for a woman of virtue and religion to marry a profligate in hopes of *reclaiming* him. 'Who can touch pitch, and not be defiled?'

As to Mr. Fenwick, I am far from having a better opinion of him than I have of Mr. Greville. You know what is whispered of him. He has more decency, however: he *avows* not free principles, as the other does. But you must have observed how much he seems to enjoy the mad talk and free sentiments of the other: and that other always brightens up and rises in his freedoms and impiety on Mr. Fenwick's sly applauses and encouraging countenance. In a word, Mr. Fenwick, not having the same lively things, nor so lively an air to carry them off, as Mr. Greville has, though he would be thought not to want sense, takes pains to shew that he has as corrupt a heart. If I thought anger would not give him consequence, I should hardly forbear to shew myself displeased, when he points, by a leering eye, and by a broad smile, the free jest of the other, to the person present whom he thinks most apt to blush, as if for fear it should be lost; and still more, when on the mantling cheek's shewing the sensibility of the person so insulted, he breaks out into a loud laugh, that she may not be able to recover herself.

Surely these men must think us women egregious hypocrites: they must believe that we only affect modesty, and in our hearts approve of their freedom: for, can it be supposed, that such as call themselves gentlemen, and who have had the education and opportunities that these two have had, would give themselves liberties of speech on *purpose* to affront us?

I hope I shall find the London gentlemen more polite than these our neighbours of the fox-chase: and yet hitherto I have seen no great cause to prefer them to the others. But about the court, and at the fashionable public places, I expect wonders. Pray Heaven, I may not be disappointed!

Thank Miss Orme, in my name, for the kind wishes she sends me. Tell her, that her doubts of my affection for her are not just; and that I do really and indeed love her.

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Nor should she want the most explicit declarations of my love, were I no more afraid of her in the character of a *sister* to a truly respectable man, than doubtful of her in that of a friend to me: in which latter light, I even joy to consider her. But she is a little naughty, tell her, because she is always leading to one subject. And yet, how can I be angry with her for it, if her good opinion of me induces her to think it in my power to make the brother happy, whom she so dearly and so deservedly loves? I cannot but esteem her for the part she takes.—And this it is that makes me afraid of the artlessly artful Miss Orme.

It would look as if I thought my duty, and love, and respects, were questionable, if in every letter I repeated them to my equally honoured and beloved benefactors, friends, and favourers. Suppose them, therefore, always included in my subscription to you, my Lucy, when I tell you that I am, and will be,

Your ever affectionate,

HARRIET BYRON.

—o—

LETTER VII.

Mr. Selby to Miss Byron.

Selby House, January 30.

WELL! and now there wants but a London lover or two to enter upon the stage, and *Vanity Fair* will be proclaimed and directly opened. Greville everywhere magnifying you, in order to justify his flame for you: Fenwick exalting you above all women: Orme adoring you, and by his humble silence saying more than any of them: proposals, besides, from this man: letters from that! What scenes of flattery and nonsense have I been witness of for these past three years and a half, that young Mr. Elford began the dance? Single! Well may you have remained single till this your twentieth year, when you have such choice of admirers, that you don't know which to have. So in a mercer's shop, the tradesman has fine time with you women; when variety of his rich wares distract you; and fifty to one at last, but, as

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well in *men* as in *silks*, you choose the worst, especially if the best is offered at first, and refused. For women know better how to be sorry, than to amend.

'It is true,' say you, 'that we young women are apt to 'be pleased with admiration—' O-ho! Are you so? And so I have gained one point with you at last; have I?

'But I have always endeavoured' [and I, Harriet, wish you had succeeded in your endeavours] 'to keep down any 'foolish pride'—Then you own that pride you have?—Another point gained! Conscience, honest conscience, *will* now and then make you women speak out. But, now I think of it, here is vanity in the very humility. Well, say you *endeavoured*, when female pride, like love, though hid under a barrel, will flame out at the bung.

Well, said I to your aunt Selby, to your grandmamma, and to your cousin Lucy, when we all met to sit in judgment upon your letters, now I hope you'll never dispute with me more on this flagrant love of admiration, which I have so often observed swallows up the hearts and souls of you all: since your Harriet is not exempt from it; and since, with all her speciousness, with all her prudence, with all her caution, she (taken with a qualm of conscience) owns it.

But, no, truly! all is right that you *say*: all is right that you *do!*—Your very confessions are brought as so many demonstrations of your diffidence, of your ingenuousness, and I cannot tell what.

Why, I must own, that no father ever loved his daughter as I love my niece: but yet, girl, your faults, your vanities, I do not love. It is my glory, that I think myself able to judge of my friends as they *deserve*; not as being *my* friends. Why, the best beloved of my heart, your aunt herself—you know, I value her now more, now less, as she deserves. But with all those I have named, and with all your relations, indeed, their Harriet cannot be in fault. And why? Because you are related to *them*; and because they attribute to themselves some merit from the relation they stand in to you. *Supererogatorians* all of them (I *will* make words whenever I please), with their *attributions* to you; and because you are of their sex, forsooth; and because I accuse

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you in a point in which you are all concerned, and so make a common cause of it.

Here one exalts you for your *good sense;* because you have a knack, by help of a happy memory, of making everything you read, and everything that is told you, that you like, your own (your grandfather's precepts particularly); and because, I think, you pass upon us as your own what you have borrowed, if not stolen.

Another praises you for your *good nature.*—The deuce is in it, if a girl who has crowds of admirers after her, and a new lover wherever she shows her bewitching face; who is blessed with health and spirits; and has everybody for her friend, let her deserve it or not; can be *ill-natured.* Who can such a one have to quarrel with, trow?

Another extols you for your *cheerful wit,* even when displayed, bold girl as you are, upon your uncle; in which, indeed, you are upheld by the wife of my bosom, whenever I take upon me to tell you what ye all, even the best of ye, are.

Yet sometimes they praise your *modesty:* and *why* your modesty?—Because you have a skin in a manner transparent; and because you can blush, I was going to say, whenever you please.

At other times, they will find out, that you have features equally delicate and regular; when I think, and I have examined them jointly and separately, that all your *takingness* is owing to that open and cheerful countenance, which gives them a gloss (or what shall I call it?) that we men are apt to be pleased with at first sight—a gloss that takes one, as it were, by surprise. But give me the beauty that grows upon us every time we see it; that leaves room for something to be found out to its advantage, as we are more and more acquainted with it.

'Your correcting uncle,' you call me. And so I will be. But what hope have I of your amendment, when every living soul, man, woman, and child, that knows you, puffs you up? There goes Mr. Selby, I have heard strangers say —And who is Mr. Selby? another stranger has asked— Why, Mr. Selby is uncle to the celebrated Miss Byron.— Yet I, who have lived fifty years in this county, should

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think I might be known on my *own* account; and not as the *uncle* of a girl of twenty.

'Am I not a saucy creature?' in another place you ask. And you answer, 'I know I am.' I am glad you do. Now may I call you so by your own authority, I hope. But, with your aunt, it is only the effect of your *agreeable* vivacity. What abominable partiality! E'en do what you will, Harriet, you'll never be in fault. I could almost wish —But I won't tell you what I wish neither. But something must betide you that you little think of; depend upon that. All your days cannot be halcyon ones. I would give a thousand pounds with all my soul, to see you heartily in love: ay, up to the very ears, and unable to help yourself! You are not *thirty* yet, child: and, indeed, you seem to *think* the time of danger is *not over*. I am glad of your *consciousness*, my dear. Shall I tell Greville of your doubts, and of your difficulties, Harriet? As to the ten *coming* years, I mean? And shall I tell him of your prayer to pass them safely?—But is not this wish of yours, that ten years of bloom were over-past, and that you were arrived at the thirtieth year of your age, a very singular one?—A flight! A mere flight! Ask ninety-nine of your sex out of an hundred, if they would adopt it.

In another letter you ask Lucy, 'If Mr. Greville has not 'said, that flattery is dearer to a woman than her food?' Well, niece, and what would you be at? Is it not so?—I do aver that Mr. Greville is a sensible man, and makes good observations.

'Men's chief strength,' you say, 'lies in the weakness of 'women.' Why, so it does. Where else should it lie? And this from their immeasurable love of admiration and flattery, as here you seem to acknowledge of your own accord, though it has been so often perversely disputed with me. Give you women but rope enough, you'll do your own business.

However, in many places you have pleased me—but nowhere more than when you recollect my *averment* (without contradicting it; which is a rarity!), 'that a woman out of 'wedlock is half useless to the end of her being.' Good girl! That was an assertion of mine, and I will abide by it.

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Lucy simpered when we came to this place, and looked at me. She expected, I saw, my notice upon it; so did your aunt: but the confession was so frank, that I was generous; and only said,—true as the gospel.

I have written a long letter; yet have not said one quarter of what I intended to say when I began. You will allow, that you have given your *correcting* uncle ample subject. But you fare something the better for saying, 'you unbespeak not your monitor.'

You *own*, that you have some vanity. Be more free in your acknowledgments of this nature (you *may;* for are you not a woman?) and you'll fare something the better for your ingenuousness; and the rather, as your acknowledgment will help me up with your aunt and Lucy, and your grandmamma, in an argument I will not give up.

I have had fresh applications made to me—but I will not say from whom: since we have agreed, long ago, not to prescribe to so discreet a girl, as, in the main, we all think you, in the articles of love and marriage.

With all your faults, I must love you. I am half ashamed to say how much I miss you already. We are all naturally cheerful folks: yet, I don't know how it is, your absence has made a strange chasm at our table. Let us hear from you every post: that will be something. Your doting aunt tells the hours on the day she expects a letter. Your grandmother is at present with us, and in heart, I am sure, regrets your absence; but, as your tenderness to her has kept you from going to London for so many years, she thinks she ought to be easy. Her example goes a great way with us all, you know; and particularly with

Your truly affectionate

(Though *correcting*) Uncle,

GEO. SELBY.

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LETTER VIII.

Miss Byron to Miss Selby.

Tuesday, January 31.

I AM already, my dear Lucy, quite contrary to my own expectation, enabled to obey the third general injunction laid upon me, at parting, by you, and all my dear friends; since a gentleman, not inconsiderable in his family or fortune, has already beheld your Harriet with partiality.

Not to heighten your impatience by unnecessary parade, his name is Fowler. He is a young gentleman of a handsome independent fortune, and still larger expectations from a Welsh uncle now in town, Sir Rowland Meredith, knighted in his sheriffalty, on occasion of an address which he brought up to the king from his county.

Sir Rowland, it seems, requires from his nephew, on pain of forfeiting his favour for ever, that he marry not without his approbation: which, he declares, he never will give, except the woman be of a good family; has a gentlewoman's fortune; has had the benefit of a religious education; which he considers as the best security that can be given for her good behaviour as a wife, and as a *mother;* so forward does the good knight look! Her character unsullied; acquainted with the theory of the domestic duties, and not ashamed, occasionally, to enter into the direction of the practice. Her fortune, however, as his nephew will have a good one, he declares to be the least thing he stands upon; only that he would have her possessed of from six to ten thousand pounds, that it may not appear to be a match of mere love, and as if his nephew were *taken in,* as he calls it, rather by the eyes than the understanding. Where a woman can have such a fortune given her by her family, though no greater, it will be an earnest, he says, that the family she is of have *worth,* as he calls it, and want not to owe obligations to that of the man she marries.

Something particular, something that has the look of forecast and prudence, you'll say, in the old knight.

Oh! but I had like to have forgot; his future niece must

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also be handsome. He values himself, it seems, upon the breed of his horses and dogs, and makes polite comparisons between the *more* noble and the *less* noble animals.

Sir Rowland himself, as you will guess by his particularity, is an old bachelor, and one who wants to have a woman made on purpose for his nephew; and who positively insists upon qualities, before he knows her; not one of which, perhaps, his future niece will have.

Don't you remember Mr. Tolson of Derbyshire? He was determined never to marry a widow. If he did, it should be one who had a vast fortune, and who never had a child: and he had still a more particular exception; and that was to a woman who had red hair. He held his exceptions till he was forty: and then being looked upon as a determined bachelor, no family thought it worth their while to make proposals to him; no woman to throw out a net for him (to express myself in the style of the gay Mr. Greville); and he at last fell in with, and married the laughing Mrs. Turner: a widow, who had little or no fortune, had one child, a daughter, living, and that child an absolute idiot; and, to complete the perverseness of his fate, her hair not only red, but the most disagreeable of reds. The honest man was grown splenetic: disregarded by everybody, he was become disregardful of himself. He hoped for a cure of his gloominess, from her cheerful vein; and seemed to think himself under obligation to one who had taken notice of him, when nobody else would. Bachelors' wives! Maids' children! These old saws always mean something.

Mr. Fowler saw me at my cousin Reeves's the first time. I cannot say he is disagreeable in his *person:* but he seems to want the *mind* I would have a man blessed with to whom I am to vow love and honour. I purpose, whenever I marry, to make a very good, and even a dutiful wife: [Must I not vow obedience? and shall I break my marriage vow?] I would not, therefore, on any consideration, marry a man, whose want of knowledge might make me stagger in the performance of my duty to him; and who would perhaps command, from caprice, or want of understanding, what I should think unreasonable to be complied with. There is a pleasure and credit in yielding up even one's

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judgment, in things indifferent, to a man who is older and wiser than one's self: but we are apt to doubt in one of a contrary character, what in the other we should have no doubt about: and doubt, you know, of a person's merit, is the first step to disrespect: and what, but disobedience, which lets in every evil, is the next?

I saw instantly that Mr. Fowler beheld me with a distinguished regard. We women, you know [let me for once be aforehand with my uncle], are very quick in making discoveries of this nature. But everybody at table saw it. He came again next day, and besought Mr. Reeves to give him his interest with me, without asking any questions about my fortune; though he was even generously particular as to his own. He might, since he has an unexceptionable one. Who is it, in these cases, that forgets to set foremost the advantages by which he is distinguished? While fortune is the last thing talked of by him, who has little or none: and then *love, love, love,* is all his cry.

Mr. Reeves, who has a good opinion of Mr. Fowler, in answer to his inquiries, told him, that he believed I was disengaged in my affections. Mr. Fowler rejoiced at that. That I had no questions to ask, but those of duty; which, indeed, he said, was a stronger tie with me than interest. He praised my temper, and my frankness of heart; the latter at the expense of my sex; for which I least thanked him, when he told me what he had said. In short, he acquainted him with everything that was necessary, and more than was necessary, for him to know, of the favour of my family, and of my good Mr. Deane, in referring all proposals of this kind to myself; mingling the detail with commendations, which only could be excused by the goodness of his own heart, and accounted for by his partiality to his cousin.

Mr. Fowler expressed great apprehensions on my cousin's talking of these references of my grandmother, aunt, and Mr. Deane, to myself, on occasions of this nature; which, he said, he presumed had been too frequent for his hopes.

If you have any hope, Mr. Fowler, said Mr. Reeves, it must be in your good character; and that much preferably to your clear estate and great expectations. Although she

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takes no pride in the number of her admirers, yet it is natural to suppose that it has made her more difficult; and difficulties are enhanced, in proportion to the generous confidence which all her friends have in her discretion. And when I told him, proceeded Mr. Reeves, that your fortune exceeded greatly what Sir Rowland required in a wife for him; and that you had, as well from inclination, as education, a serious turn; Too much, too much, in one person, cried he out. As to fortune, he wished you had not a shilling; and if he could obtain your favour, he should be the happiest man in the world.

Oh, my good Mr. Reeves, said I, how have you over-rated my merits! Surely you have not given Mr. Fowler your interest? If you *have,* should you not, for *his* sake, have known something of my mind before you had set me out thus, had I even deserved your high opinion?—Mr. Fowler might have reason to repent the double well-meant kindness of his friend, if men in these days were used to break their hearts for love.

It is the language I do and must talk of you in, to everybody, returned Mr. Reeves: Is it not the language that those most talk who know you best?

Where the world is inclined to favour, replied I, it is apt to *over*-rate, as much as it will *under*-rate where it disfavours. In this case, you should not have proceeded so far as to engage a gentleman's hopes. What may be the end of all this, but to make a compassionate nature, as mine has been thought to be, if Mr. Fowler should be greatly in earnest, uneasy to itself, in being obliged to show pity, where she cannot return love?

What I have said, I have said, replied Mr. Reeves. Pity is but one remove from love. Mrs. Reeves (there she sits) was first brought to pity me; for never was man more madly in love than I; and then I thought myself sure of her. And so it proved. I can tell you I am no enemy to Mr. Fowler.

And so, my dear, Mr. Fowler seems to think he has met with a woman who would make a fit wife for him: but your Harriet, I doubt, has not in Mr. Fowler met with a man whom she can think a fit husband for her.

The very next morning, Sir Rowland himself——

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But now, my Lucy, if I proceed to tell you all the fine things that are said *of* me, and *to* me, what will my uncle Selby say? Will he not attribute all I shall repeat of this sort, to that pride, to that vanity, to that fondness of admiration, which he, as well as Mr. Greville, is continually charging upon all our sex?

Yet he expects that I shall give a minute account of everything that passes, and of every conversation in which I have any part. How shall I do to please him? And yet I know I shall *best* please him, if I give him room to find fault with me. But then, should he for my faults blame the whole sex? Is that just?

You will tell me, I know, that if I give speeches and conversations, I ought to give them justly: that the humours and characters of persons cannot be known, unless I repeat *what* they say, and their manner of saying: that I must leave it to the speakers and complimenters to answer for the likeness of the pictures they draw: that I know best my own heart, and whether I am puffed up by the praises given me: that if I *am*, I shall discover it by my superciliousness; and be enough punished on the discovery, by incurring, from those I love, deserved blame, if not contempt, instead of preserving their wished-for esteem.—Let me add to all this, that there is an author (I forget who) who says, 'It is 'lawful to repeat those things, though spoken in our praise, 'that are necessary to be known, and cannot otherwise be 'come at.'

And now let me ask, Will this preamble do, once for all?

It will. And so says my aunt Selby. And so says every one but my uncle. Well, then, I will proceed, and repeat all that shall be said, and that as well to my disadvantage as advantage; only resolving not to be exalted with the one, and to do my endeavour to amend by the other. And here, pray tell my uncle, that I do not desire he will spare me; since the faults he shall find in his Harriet shall always put her upon her guard—Not, however, to conceal them from his discerning eye; but to amend them.

And now, having, as I said, once for all, prepared you to guard against a surfeit of self-praise, though delivered at second or third hand, I will go on with my narrative—But

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hold—my paper reminds me that I have written a monstrous letter—I will therefore, with a new sheet, begin a new one. Only adding to this, that I am, and ever will be,

Your affectionate

HARRIET BYRON.

P.S.—Well, but what shall I do now?—I have just received my uncle's letter. And, after his charge upon me of vanity and pride, will my parade, as above, stand me in any stead?—I must trust to it. Only one word to my dear and ever-honoured uncle—Don't you, sir, impute to me a belief of the truth of those extravagant compliments made by men professing love to me; and I will not wish you to think me one bit the wiser, the handsomer, the better, for them, than I was before.

—o—

LETTER IX.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Thursday, February 2.

THE very next morning Sir Rowland himself paid his respects to Mr. Reeves.

The knight, before he would open himself very freely as to the business he came upon, desired that he might have an opportunity to see me. I knew nothing of him, nor of his business. We were just going to breakfast. Miss Allestree, Miss Bramber, and Miss Dolyns, a young lady of merit, were with us.

Just as we had taken our seats, Mr. Reeves introduced Sir Rowland, but let him not know which was Miss Byron. He did nothing, at first sitting down, but peer in our faces by turns; and fixing his eye upon Miss Allestree, he jogged Mr. Reeves with his elbow—Hay, sir? audibly whispered he.

Mr. Reeves was silent. Sir Rowland, who is short-sighted, then looked under his bent brows, at Miss Bramber; then at Miss Dolyns; and then at me—Hay, sir? whispered he again.

He sat out the first dish of tea with an impatience equal,

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as it seemed, to his uncertainty. And at last taking Mr. Reeves by one of his buttons, desired a word with him. They withdrew together; and the knight, not quitting hold of Mr. Reeves's button, Ad's-my-life, sir, said he, I hope I am right. I love my nephew as I love myself. I live but for him. He ever was dutiful to me, his uncle. If that be Miss Byron who sits on the right hand of your lady, with the countenance of an angel, her eyes sparkling with good humour, and blooming as a May morning, the business is done. I give my consent. Although I heard not a word pass from her lips, I am sure she is all intelligence. My boy *shall* have her. The other young ladies are agreeable: but if this be the lady my kinsman is in love with, he *shall* have her. How will she outshine all our Caermarthen ladies! and yet we have charming girls in Caermarthen!—Am I, or am I not right, Mr. Reeves, as to my nephew's *flame*, as they call it?

The lady you describe, Sir Rowland, is Miss Byron.

And then Mr. Reeves, in his usual partial manner, let his heart overflow at his lips in my favour.

Thank God! thank God! said the knight. Let us return. Let us go in again. I will say something to her to make her speak: but not a word to dash her. I expect her voice to be music, if it be as harmonious as the rest of her. By the softness or harshness of the voice, let me tell you, Mr. Reeves, I form a judgment of the heart, and soul, and manners, of a lady. 'Tis a *criterion*, as they call it, of my own; and I am hardly ever mistaken. Let us go in again, I pray ye.

They returned, and took their seats; the knight making an awkward apology for taking my cousin out.

Sir Rowland, his forehead smoothed, and his face shining, sat swelling, as big with meaning, yet not knowing how to begin. Mrs. Reeves and Miss Allestree were talking at the re-entrance of the gentlemen. Sir Rowland thought he must say something, however distant from his main purpose. Breaking silence, therefore; You, ladies, seemed to be deep in discourse when we came in. Whatever were your subject, I beg you will resume it.

They had finished, they assured him, what they had to say.

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Sir Rowland seemed still at a loss. He hemmed three times, and looked at me with particular kindness. Mr. Reeves then, in pity to his fulness, asked him, how long he proposed to stay in town?

He had thought, he said, to have set out in a week; but something had happened, which he believed could not be completed under a *fortnight*. Yet I want to be down, said he; for I had just finished, as I came up, the new-built house I design to present to my nephew when he marries. I pretend, plain man as I am, to be a judge, both of taste and elegance. [Sir Rowland was now set a going.] All I wish for, is to see him happily settled. Ah, ladies! that I need not go further than this table for a wife for my boy?

We all smiled, and looked upon each other.

You young ladies, proceeded he, have great advantages in certain cases over us men; and this (which I little thought of till it came to be my own case), whether we speak for our kindred or for ourselves. But will you, madam, to Mrs. Reeves; will you, sir, to Mr. Reeves; answer my questions —as to these ladies?—I *must* have a niece among them. My nephew, though I say it, is one whom any lady may love: and as for fortune, let me alone to make him, in *addition* to his own, all clear as the sun, worthy of any woman's acceptance, though she were a duchess.

We were all silent, and smiled upon one another.

What I would ask then, is, which of the ladies before me —Mercy! I believe, by their smiling, and by their pretty looks, they are none of them engaged. I will begin with the young lady on your right hand. She looks *so* lovely, *so* good-natured, and *so* condescending!—Mercy! what an open forehead!—Hem!—Forgive me, madam; but I believe you would not disdain to answer my question yourself—Are you, madam, are you absolutely and *bona fide* disengaged? or are you not?

As this, Sir Rowland, answered I, is a question I can best resolve, I frankly own, that I am disengaged.

Charming! charming!—Mercy! Why, now, what a noble frankness in that answer!—No jesting matter! You may smile, ladies.—I hope, madam, you say true: I hope I may rely upon it, that your affections are not engaged.

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You may, Sir Rowland. I do not love, even in jest, to be guilty of an untruth.

Admirable!—But let me tell you, madam, that I hope you will not many days have this to say. Ad's-my-life! sweet soul! how I rejoice to see that charming flush in the finest cheek in the world! But Heaven forbid that I should dash so sweet a creature!—Well, but now there is no going further. Excuse me, ladies; I mean not a slight to any of you: but now, you know, there is no going further.—And will you, madam, permit me to introduce to you, as a lover, as an humble servant, a very proper and agreeable young man? *Let* me introduce him: he is *my* nephew. Your looks are all graciousness. Perhaps you have seen him: and if you are really disengaged, you can have no objection to him: of that I am confident. And I am told, that you have nobody that either *can* or *will* control you.

The more controllable for that very reason, Sir Rowland.

Ad's-my-life, I like your answer. Why, madam, you must be full as good as you look to be. I wish I were a young man myself for *your sake!* But tell me, madam, will you permit a visit from my nephew this afternoon?—Come, come, dear young lady, be as gracious as you look to be. Fortune must do. Had you not a shilling, I should rejoice in such a niece; and that is more than I ever said in my life before. My nephew is a sober man, a modest man. He has a good estate of his own: a clear £2000 a year. I will add to it in my lifetime as much more. Be all this good company witnesses for me. I am no flincher. It is well known the word of Sir Rowland Meredith is as good as his bond at all times. I love these open doings. I love to be above board. What signifies shilly-shally? What says the old proverb?

Happy is the wooing
That is not long a doing.

But, Sir Rowland, said I, there are proverbs that may be set against your proverb. You hint that I have seen the gentleman: now, I have never yet seen the man whose addresses I could encourage.

Oh, I like you the better for that. None but the *giddy*

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love at first sight. Ad's-my-life, you would have been snapt up before now, young as you are, could you easily have returned love for love. Why, madam, you cannot be above sixteen?

Oh, Sir Rowland, you are mistaken. Cheerfulness, and a contented mind, make a difference to advantage of half a dozen years at any time. I am much nearer twenty-one than *nineteen*, I assure you.

Nearer to twenty-one than *nineteen*, and yet so freely tell your age, without asking!

Miss Byron, Sir Rowland, said Mrs. Reeves, is young enough at twenty, surely, to own her age.

True, madam; but at twenty, if not before, time always stands still with women. A lady's age once known, will be always remembered; and that more for spite than love. At twenty-eight or thirty, I believe most ladies are willing to strike off half a dozen years at least—And yet, and yet (smiling, and looking arch), I have always said (pardon me, ladies), that it is a sign, when women are so desirous to conceal their age, that they think they shall be good for nothing when in years. Ah, ladies! shaking his head, and laughing, women don't think of that. But how I admire you, madam, for your frankness! Would to the Lord you were twenty-four!—I would have no woman marry under twenty-four: and that, let me tell you, ladies, for the following reasons—standing up, and putting the fore-finger of his right hand, extended with a flourish, upon the thumb of his left.

Oh, Sir Rowland! I doubt not but you can give very good reasons. And I assure you, I intend not to marry on the wrong side, as I call it, of twenty-four.

Admirable, by mercy! but that won't do neither. The man lives not, young lady, who will stay your time, if he can have you at his. I love your noble frankness. Then such sweetness of countenance (sitting down, and audibly whispering, and jogging my cousin with his elbow), such dove-like eyes, daring to tell all that is in the honest heart! —I am a physiognomist, madam (raising his voice to me). Ad's-my-life, you are a perfect paragon! Say you will encourage my boy, or you will be worse off: for (standing up again) I will come and court you myself. A good estate gives a man confidence; and, when I set about it.—Hum!

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—(one hand stuck in his side; flourishing with the other) no woman yet, I do assure you,—ever won my heart as you have done.

Oh, Sir Rowland, I thought you were too wise to be swayed by first impressions: none but the *giddy*, you know, love at first sight.

Admirable! admirable, indeed! I knew you had wit at will; and I am sure you have wisdom. Know you, ladies, that *wit* and *wisdom* are two different things, and are very rarely seen together? Plain man as I appear to be (looking on himself first on one side, then on the other, and unbuttoning his coat two buttons to let a gold braid appear upon his waistcoat), I can tell ye, I have not lived all this time for nothing. I am considered in Wales—Hem!—But I will not praise myself.—Ad's-my-life! how do this young lady's perfections run me all into tongue!—But I see you all respect her as well as I; so I need not make apology to the rest of you young ladies, for the distinction paid to her. I wish I had as many nephews as there are ladies of you disengaged: by mercy, we would be all of kin.

Thank you, Sir Rowland, said each of the young ladies, smiling, and diverted at his oddity.

But as to my observation, continued the knight, that none but the *giddy* love at first sight; there is no general rule without exception, you know: every man *must* love *you* at first sight. Do I not love you myself? and yet never did I see you before, nor anybody like you.

You know not what you do, Sir Rowland, to raise thus the vanity of a poor girl. How may you make conceit and pride run away with her, till she become contemptible for both in the eye of every person whose good opinion is worth cultivating!

Ad's-my-life, that's prettily said! But let me tell you, that the *she* who can give this caution in the midst of her praisings, can be in no danger of being run away with by her vanity. Why, madam! you *extort* praises from me! I never ran on so glibly in praise of mortal woman before. You must cease to look, to smile, to speak, I can tell you, if you would have me cease to praise you!

'Tis well you are not a young man, Sir Rowland, said

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Admirably said again! But men will sometimes forget that there are ladies in company.

Very favourably put for the men, Sir Rowland. But pardon me, if I own, that I should have a mean opinion of a man who allowed himself to talk even to *men* what a woman might not hear. A pure heart, whether in man or woman, will be always, in every company, on every occasion, pure.

Ad's-my-life, you have excellent notions, madam! I wanted to hear you speak just now: and now you make me, and every one else, silent.—Twenty-one! why, what you say would shame *sixty-one.* You must have kept excellent company all your life!—Mercy! if ever I heard the like from a lady so young!—What a glory you reflect back upon all who had any hand in your education! Why was I not born within the past thirty years? I might then have had some hopes of you myself!—And this brings me to my former subject, of my nephew.—But Mr. Reeves, one word with you, Mr. Reeves. I beg your pardon, ladies: but the importance of the matter will excuse me: and I must get out of town as soon as I can.—One word with you, Mr. Reeves.

The gentlemen withdrew together: for breakfast by this time was over. And then the knight opened all his heart to Mr. Reeves, and besought his interest. He would afterwards have obtained an audience, as he called it, of me; but the three young ladies having taken leave of us, and Mrs. Reeves and I being retired to dress, I excused myself.

He then desired leave to attend me to-morrow evening: but Mr. Reeves pleading engagements till Monday evening, he besought him to indulge him with his interest in that long *gap of time,* as he called it, and for my being then in the way.

And thus, Lucy, have I given you an ample account of what has passed with regard to this new servant, as gentlemen call themselves, in order to become our masters.

'Tis now Friday morning. We are just setting out to dine with Lady Betty. If the day furnishes me with any amusing materials for my next packet, its agreeableness will be doubled to

Your ever-affectionate

HARRIET BYRON.

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LETTER X.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Friday Night.

SOME amusement, my Lucy, the day has afforded. Indeed more than I could have wished. A large packet, however, for Selby House.

Lady Betty received us most politely. She had company with her, to whom she introduced us, and presented me in a very advantageous character.

Shall I tell you how their first appearance struck me, and what I have since heard and observed of them?

The first I shall mention was Miss Cantillon; very pretty; but visibly proud, affected, and conceited.

The second, Miss Clements; plain; but of a fine understanding, improved by reading; and who, having no personal advantages to be vain of, has, by the cultivation of her mind, obtained a preference in every one's opinion over the fair Cantillon.

The third was Miss Barnevelt, a lady of masculine features, and whose mind belied not those features; for she has the character of being loud, bold, free, even fierce when opposed; and affects at all times such airs of contempt of her own sex, that one almost wonders at her condescending to wear petticoats.

The gentlemen's names were Walden and Singleton; the first, an Oxford scholar of family and fortune; but quaint and opinionated, despising every one who has not had the benefit of an university education.

Mr. Singleton is a harmless man; who is, it seems, the object of more ridicule, even down to his very name, among all his acquaintance, than I think he by any means ought, considering the apparent inoffensiveness of the man, who did not give *himself* his intellects; and his constant good humour, which might entitle him to better quarter; the rather too, as he has one point of knowledge, which those who think themselves his superiors in understanding, do not always attain, the knowledge of himself; for he is humble,

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modest, ready to confess an inferiority to every one: and as laughing at a jest is by some taken for high applause, he is ever the first to bestow that commendation on what others say; though, it must be owned, he now and then mistakes for a jest what is none: which, however, may be generally more the fault of the speakers than of Mr. Singleton; since he takes his cue from their smiles, especially when those are seconded by the laugh of one of whom he has a good opinion.

Mr. Singleton is in possession of a good estate, which makes amends for many defects. He has a turn, it is said, to the well-managing of it; and nobody understands his own interest better than he: by which knowledge, he has opportunities to lay obligations upon many of those, who behind his back think themselves entitled, by their supposed superior sense, to deride him: and he is ready enough to oblige in this way: but it is always on such securities, that he has never given cause for spendthrifts to laugh at him on that account.

It is thought that the friends of the fair Cantillon would not be averse to an alliance with this gentleman: while I, were I his sister, should rather wish, that he had so much wisdom in his weakness, as to devote himself to the worthier Pulcheria Clements (Lady Betty's wish as well as mine), whose fortune, though not despicable, and whose humbler views, would make her think herself repaid, by his fortune, the obligation she would lay him under by her acceptance of him.

Nobody, it seems, thinks of a *husband* for Miss Barnevelt. She is sneeringly spoken of rather as a *young fellow*, than as a woman; and who will one day look out for a *wife* for herself. One reason, indeed, she everywhere gives, for being satisfied with being a woman; which is, *that she cannot be married to a* WOMAN.

An odd creature, my dear. But see what women get by going out of character. Like the bats in the fable, they are looked upon as mortals of a doubtful species, hardly owned by either, and laughed at by both.

This was the company, and all the company, besides us, that Lady Betty expected. But mutual civilities had hardly

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passed, when Lady Betty, having been called out, returned, introducing, as a gentleman who would be acceptable to every one, Sir Hargrave Pollexfen. He is, whispered she to me, as he saluted the rest of the company in a very gallant manner, a young baronet of a very large estate, the greatest part of which has lately come to him by the death of a grandmother, and two uncles, all very rich.

When he was presented to me, by name, and I to him; I think myself very happy, said he, in being admitted to the presence of a young lady so celebrated for her graces of person and mind. Then, addressing himself to Lady Betty, Much did I hear, when I was at the last Northampton races, of Miss Byron: but little did I expect to find report fall so short of what I see.

Miss Cantillon bridled, played with her fan, and looked as if she thought herself slighted; a little scorn intermingled with the airs she gave herself.

Miss Clements smiled, and looked pleased, as if she enjoyed, good-naturedly, a compliment made to one of the sex which she adorns by the goodness of her heart.

Miss Barnevelt said, she had, from the moment I first entered, beheld me with the eye of a lover. And freely taking my hand, squeezed it.—Charming creature! said she, as if addressing a country innocent, and perhaps expecting me to be covered with blushes and confusion.

The baronet excusing himself to Lady Betty, assured her, that she must place this his bold intrusion to the account of Miss Byron, he having been told that she was to be there.

Whatever were his motive, Lady Betty said, he did her favour; and she was sure the whole company would think themselves *doubly* obliged to Miss Byron.

The student looked as if he thought himself eclipsed by Sir Hargrave, and as if, in revenge, he was putting his fine speeches into Latin, and trying them by the rules of grammar; a broken sentence from a classic author bursting from his lips; and, at last standing up, half on tip-toe (as if he wanted to look down upon the baronet), he stuck one hand in his side, and passed by him, casting a contemptuous eye on his gaudy dress.

Mr. Singleton smiled, and looked as if delighted with all

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he saw and heard. Once, indeed, he tried to speak: his mouth actually opened, to give passage to his words: as sometimes seems to be his way before the words are quite ready: but he sat down satisfied with the effort.

It is true, people who do not make themselves contemptible by affectation should not be despised. Poor and rich, wise and unwise, we are all links of the same great chain. And you must tell me, my dear, if I, in endeavouring to give true descriptions of the persons I see, incur the censure I pass on others who despise any one for the defects they cannot help.

Will you forgive me, my dear, if I make this letter as long as my last?

No, say.

Well then, I thank you for a freedom so consistent with our friendship: and conclude with assurances, that I am, and ever will be,

Most affectionately yours,

HARRIET BYRON.

—o—

LETTER XI.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

IT was convenient to me, Lucy, to break off where I did in my last; else I should not have been so very self-denying as to suppose you had no curiosity to hear, what undoubtedly I wanted to tell. Two girls talking over a new set of company, would my uncle Selby say, are not apt to break off very abruptly; not she especially of the two, who has found out a fair excuse to repeat every compliment made to herself; and when, perhaps, there may be a new admirer in the case.

May there so, my uncle? And which of the gentlemen do you think the man? The baronet, I suppose, you guess. —And so he is.

Well then, let me give you, Lucy, a sketch of him. But consider; I form my accounts from what I have since been told, as well as from what I observed at the time.

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Sir Hargrave Pollexfen is handsome and genteel; pretty tall, about twenty-eight or thirty. His complexion is a little of the fairest for a man, and a little of the palest. He has remarkably bold eyes; rather approaching to what we would call goggling; and he gives himself airs with them, as if he wished to have them thought rakish: perhaps as a recommendation, in his opinion, to the ladies. Lady Betty, on his back being turned, praising his person, Miss Cantillon said, Sir Hargrave had the finest eyes she ever saw in a man. They were manly, *meaning* ones.

He is very voluble in speech; but seems to owe his volubility more to his want of doubt, than to the extraordinary merit of what he says. Yet he is thought to have ense; and if he could prevail upon himself to hear more, and speak less, he would better deserve the good opinion he thinks himself sure of. But as he can say anything without hesitating, and excites a laugh by laughing himself at all he is going to say, as well as at what he has just said, he is thought infinitely agreeable by the gay, and by those who wish to drown thought in merriment.

Sir Hargrave, it seems, has travelled: but he must have carried abroad with him a great number of follies, and a great deal of affectation, if he has left any of them behind him.

But, with all his foibles, he is said to be a man of enterprise and courage; and young women, it seems, must take care how they laugh with him; for he makes ungenerous constructions to the disadvantage of a woman whom he can bring to seem pleased with his jests.

I will tell you hereafter, how I came to know this, and even worse, of him.

The taste of the present age seems to be dress: no wonder, therefore, that such a man as Sir Hargrave aims to excel in it. What can be misbestowed by a man on his person, who values it more than his mind? But he would, in my opinion, better become his dress, if the pains he undoubtedly takes before he ventures to come into public, were less apparent. This I judge from his solicitude to preserve all in exact order, when in company; for he forgets not to pay his respects to himself at every glass: yet does it with a seeming consciousness, as if he would hide a vanity too

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apparent to be concealed; breaking from it, if he finds himself observed, with a half careless, yet seemingly dissatisfied air, pretending to have discovered something amiss in himself. This seldom fails to bring him a compliment: of which he shews himself very sensible, by affectedly disclaiming the merit of it; perhaps with this speech, bowing, with his spread hand on his breast, waving his head to and fro—By my soul, madam (or sir), you do me too much honour.

Such a man is Sir Hargrave Pollexfen.

He placed himself next to the country girl; and laid himself out in fine speeches to her, running on in such a manner, that I had not for some time an opportunity to convince him that I had been in company with gay people before. He would have it, that I was a perfect beauty, and he supposed me very young—Very silly of course: and gave himself such airs, as if he were sure of my admiration.

I viewed him steadily several times; and my eye once falling under his, as I was looking at him, I daresay he at that moment pitied the poor fond heart, which he supposed was in tumults about him; when, at the very time, I was considering whether, if I were obliged to have the one or the other, as a punishment for some great fault I had committed, my choice would fall on Mr. Singleton, or on him. I mean, supposing the former were not a remarkably obstinate man; since obstinacy in a weak man, I think, must be worse than tyranny in a man of sense—If, indeed, a man of sense can be a tyrant.

A summons to dinner relieved me from his more particular addresses, and placed him at a distance from me.

Sir Hargrave, the whole time of dinner, received advantage from the supercilious looks and behaviour of Mr. Walden; who seemed, on everything the baronet said (and he was seldom silent), half to despise him; for he made at times so many different mouths of contempt, that I thought it was impossible for the *same* features to express them. I have been making mouths in the glass for several minutes, to try to recover some of Mr. Walden's, in order to describe them to you, Lucy; but I cannot for my life so distort my face as to enable me to give you a notion of one of them.

He might perhaps have been better justified in some of his

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contempts, had it not been visible, that the consequence which he took from the baronet, he gave to himself; and yet was as censurable one way, as Sir Hargrave was the other.

Mirth, however insipid, will occasion smiles; though sometimes to the disadvantage of the mirthful. But gloom, severity, moroseness, will always disgust, though in a Solomon. Mr. Walden had not been taught that: and indeed it might seem a little ungrateful [Don't you think so, Lucy?] if women failed to reward a man with their smiles, who scrupled not to make himself a—monkey (shall I say?) to please them.

Never before did I see the difference between the man of the town, and the man of the college, displayed in a light so striking as in these two gentlemen in the conversation after dinner. The one seemed resolved not to be pleased; while the other laid himself out to please everybody; and that in a manner so much at his own expense, as frequently to bring into question his understanding. By a *second* silly thing he banished the remembrance of the *first;* by a *third* the *second*, and so on: and by continually laughing at his own absurdities, left us at liberty to suppose that his folly was his choice; and that, had it not been to divert the company, he would have made a better figure.

Mr. Walden, as was evident by his scornful brow, by the contemptuous motion of his lip, and by his whole face, affectedly turned from the baronet, grudged him the smile that sat upon every one's countenance; and for which, without distinguishing whether it was a smile of *approbation* or *not*, he looked as if he pitied us all, and as if he thought himself cast into unequal company. Nay, twice or thrice he addressed himself, in preference to every one else, to honest simpering Mr. Singleton; who, for his part, as was evident, much better relished the baronet's flippancies, than the dry significance of the student. For, whenever Sir Hargrave spoke, Mr. Singleton's mouth was open: but it was quite otherwise with him, when Mr. Walden spoke, even at the time that he paid him the distinction of addressing himself to him, as if he were the principal person in the company.

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But one word, by the by, Lucy—Don't you think it is very happy for us foolish women, that the generality of the lords of the *creation* are not much wiser than ourselves? Or, to express myself in other words, that *over* wisdom is as foolish a thing to the full, as *moderate* folly?—But, hush! I have done.—I know that at this place my uncle will be ready to rise against me.

After dinner, Mr. Walden, not choosing to be any longer so egregiously eclipsed by the man of the town, put forth the scholar.

By the way, let me ask my uncle, if the word *scholar* means not the *learner*, rather than the *learned?* If it originally means no more, I would suppose that formerly the most learned men were the most modest, contenting themselves with being thought but *learners;* but, as my revered first instructor used to say, the more a man knows the more he will find he has to know.

Pray, Sir Hargrave, said Mr. Walden, may I ask you—You had a thought just now, speaking of love and beauty, which I know you must have from Tibullus. [And then he repeated the line in an *heroic* accent; and, pausing, looked upon us women.] Which university had the honour of finishing your studies, Sir Hargrave? I presume you were brought up at one of them.

Not I, said the baronet: a man, surely, may read Tibullus, and Virgil too, without being indebted to either university for his learning.

No man, Sir Hargrave, in my *humble* opinion [with a decisive air he spoke the word *humble*], can be well-grounded in any branch of learning, who has not been at one of our famous universities.

I never yet proposed, Mr. Walden, to qualify myself for a degree. My chaplain is a very pretty fellow. He understands Tibullus, I believe [immoderately laughing, and, by his eyes cast in turn upon each person at table, bespeaking a general smile]—and of Oxford, as you are.

And again he laughed: but his laugh was then such a one as rather showed ridicule than mirth: a provoking laugh: such a one as Mr. Greville often affects when he is in a disputing humour, in order to dash an opponent out of

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countenance, *by getting the laugh*, instead of the argument, on his side.

My uncle, you know, will have it sometimes, that his girl has a satirical vein. I am afraid she has.—But this I will say for her: she means no ill-nature: she loves everybody; but not their faults: as her uncle in his letter tells her. Nor wishes to be spared for her own. Nor, very probably, is she, if those who see her, write *of* her to their chosen friends, as she does to hers of them.

Shall I tell you what I imagine each person of the company I am writing about (writing in character) would say of me to *their* correspondents?—It would be digressing too much, or I would.

Mr. Walden in his heart, I daresay, was revenged on the baronet. He gave him such a look, as would have grieved *me* the whole day, had it been given me by one whom I valued.

Sir Hargrave had too much business for his eyes with the ladies, in order to obtain *their* countenance, to trouble himself about the looks of the men. And, indeed, he seemed to have as great a contempt for Mr. Walden, as Mr. Walden had for him.

But here I shall be too late for the post. Will this stuff go down with you at Selby House, in want of better subjects?

Everything from you, my Harriet—

Thank you! Thank you, all, my indulgent friends! So it ever was. Trifles from those we love, are acceptable. May I deserve your love!

Adieu, my Lucy!—But tell my Nancy, that she has delighted me by her letter.

H. B.

—o—

LETTER XII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

WHAT is *your* opinion, my charming Miss Byron? said the baronet; May not a man of fortune, who has *not* received his education and *polish* [he pronounced the word *polish* with an emphasis, and another laugh] at a university,

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make as good a figure in social life, and as ardent a lover, as if he had?

I would have been silent: but, gazing in my face, he repeated, What say *you* to this, Miss Byron?

The world, Sir Hargrave, I have heard called a university: but is it not an obvious truth, that neither a learned, nor what is called a *fine* education, has any other value than as each tends to improve the morals of men, and to make them wise and good?

The world a university! replied Mr. Walden. Why, truly, looking up to Sir Hargrave's face, and then down to his feet, disdainfully, as if he would measure him with his eyes, I cannot but say, twisting his head on one side, and with a drolling accent, that the world produces very pretty scholars—for the ladies—

The baronet took fire at being so contemptuously measured by the eye of the student; and I thought it was not amiss, for fear of high words between them, to put myself forward.

And are not women, Mr. Walden, resumed I, one half in number, though not perhaps in value, of the human species? Would it not be pity, sir, if the knowledge that is to be obtained in the *lesser* university should make a man despise what is to be acquired in the *greater*, in which that knowledge was principally intended to make him useful?

This diverted the baronet's anger. Well, Mr. Walden, said he, exulting, rubbing his hands, what say you to the young lady's observation? By my soul it is worth your notice. You may carry it down with you to *your* university; and the best scholars there will not be the worse for attending to it.

Mr. Walden seemed to collect himself, as if he were inclined to consider me with more attention than he had done before; and waving his hand, as if he would put by the baronet, as an adversary he had done with, I am to thank you, madam, said he, it seems, for your observation. And so the *lesser* university—

I have great veneration, Mr. Walden, interrupted I, for learning, and great honour for learned men—But this is a subject—

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That you must not get off from, young lady.

I am sorry to hear you say so, sir—But indeed I must.

The company seemed pleased to see me so likely to be drawn in; and this encouraged Mr. Walden to push his weak adversary.

Know you, madam, said he, anything of the learned languages?

No, indeed, sir—Nor do I know which, particularly, you call so.

The Greek, the Latin, madam.

Who, I, a woman know anything of Latin and Greek! I know but one lady who is mistress of both; and she finds herself so much an owl among the birds, that she wants of all things to be thought to have unlearned them.

Why, ladies, I cannot but *say*, that I should rather choose to marry a woman whom I could teach something, than one who would think herself qualified to teach me.

Is it a *necessary* consequence, sir, said Miss Clements, that knowledge, which makes a man shine, should make a woman vain and pragmatical? May not two persons, having the same taste, improve each other? Was not this the case of Monsieur and Madam Dacier?

Flint and steel to each other, added Lady Betty.

Turkish policy, I doubt, in you men, proceeded Miss Clements—No *second brother near the throne.* That empire some think the safest which is founded in ignorance.

We know, Miss Clements, replied Mr. Walden, that you are a well-read lady. But I have nothing to say to observations that are in everybody's mouth—Pardon me, madam.

Indeed, sir, said Mr. Reeves, I think Miss Clements should *not* pardon you. There is, in my opinion, great force in what she said.

But I have a mind to talk with this fair lady, your cousin, Mr. Reeves. She is the very woman that I wish to hold an argument with, on the hints she threw out.

Pardon me, sir. But I will not return the compliment. I cannot argue.

And yet, madam, I will not let you go off so easily. You seem to be very happy in your elocution, and to have some pretty notions for so young a lady.

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I cannot argue, sir—

Dear Miss Byron, said the baronet, hear what Mr. Walden has to say to you.

Every one made the same request. I was silent, looked down, and played with my fan.

When Mr. Walden had liberty to say what he pleased, he seemed at a loss himself for words.

At last, I asked you, madam, I asked you (hesitatingly began he), whether you knew anything of the learned languages? It has been whispered to me, that you have had great advantages from a grandfather, of whose learning and politeness we have heard much. He was a scholar. He was of Christ church, in our university, if I am not mistaken —To my question you answered, that you knew not particularly which were the languages that I called the learned ones: and you have been pleased to throw out hints in relation to the *lesser* and the *greater* university; by all which you certainly mean something——

Pray, Mr. Walden, said I——

And pray, Miss Byron—I am afraid of all smatterers in learning. Those who know a little—and ladies cannot know to the bottom—They have not the happiness of a university education——

Nor is every man at the *university*, I presume, sir, a Mr. Walden.

O my Lucy! I have since been told, that this pragmatical man has very few admirers in the university, to which, out of it, he is so fond of boasting a relation.

He took what I said for a compliment—Why, as to that, madam—bowing—But this is a misfortune *to* ladies, not a fault *in* them—But, as I was going to say, those who know little, are very seldom sound, are very seldom orthodox, as we call it, whether respecting *religion* or *learning:* and as it seems you lost your grandfather too early to be well-grounded in the latter (in the former, Lady Betty, who is my informant, says, you are a very *good* young lady), I should be glad to put you right if you happened to be a little out of the way.

I thank you, sir, bowing, and (simpleton!) still playing with my fan. But, though Mr. Reeves said nothing, he did

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not think me very politely treated. Yet he wanted, he told me afterwards, to have me drawn out.

He should not have served me so, I told him; especially among strangers, and *men*.

Now, madam, will you be pleased to inform me, said Mr. Walden, whether you had any *particular* meaning, when you answered, that you knew not which I called the learned languages? You must know that the Latin and Greek are of those so called.

I beg, Mr. Walden, that I may not be thus singled out—Mr. Reeves—Sir, *you* have had university education. Pray relieve your cousin.

Mr. Reeves smiled; bowed his head; but said nothing.

You are pleased, madam, proceeded Mr. Walden, to mention one learned lady; and said, that she looked upon herself as an owl among the birds.

And you, sir, said, that you had rather (and I believe most men are of your mind) have a woman you could teach—

Than one who would suppose she could teach me—I did so.

Well, sir, and would you have me be guilty of an ostentation that would bring me no credit, if I had had some pains taken with me in my education? But indeed, sir, I know not anything of those you called the learned languages. Nor do I take all learning to consist in the knowledge of languages.*

All learning!—Nor I, madam—But if you place not learning in language, be so good as to tell us what you *do* place it in?

He nodded his head with an air, as if he had said, This pretty miss has got out of her depth: I believe I shall have her now.

I would rather, sir, said I, be a hearer than a speaker; and the one would better become me than the other. I answered Sir Hargrave, because he thought proper to apply to me.

And *I*, madam, apply to you likewise.

* This argument is resumed, Vol. IV. by a more competent judge both of learning and language than Mr. Walden.

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Then, sir, I have been taught to think, that a learned man and a linguist may very well be two persons.

Be pleased to proceed, madam.

Languages, undoubtedly, sir, are of use, to let us into the knowledge for which so many of the ancients were famous—But—

Here I stopt. Every one's eyes were upon me. I was a little out of countenance.

In what a situation, Lucy, are we women!—If we have some little genius, and have taken pains to cultivate it, we must be thought guilty of affectation, whether we appear desirous to conceal it, or submit to have it called forth.

But, what, madam? Pray proceed, eagerly said Mr. Walden—*But*, what, madam?

But have not the moderns, sir, if I must speak, the same advantages which the ancients had, and some which they had not? The first great geniuses of all had not human example, had not human precepts——

Nor were the first geniuses *of all* (with an emphasis, replied Mr. Walden) so perfect, as the observations of the geniuses of after-times, which were built upon their foundations, made *them;* and *they* others. Learning, or knowledge, as you choose to call it, was a progressive thing: and it became necessary to understand the different languages in which the sages of antiquity wrote, in order to avail ourselves of their learning.

Very right, sir, I believe. You consider skill in languages, then, as a *vehicle* to knowledge—Not, I presume, as *science* itself.

I was sorry the baronet laughed; because his laughing made it more difficult for me to get off as I wanted to do.

Pray, Sir Hargrave, said Mr. Walden, let not *every* thing that is said be laughed at. I am fond of talking to this young lady: and a conversation upon this topic may tend as much to *edification*, perhaps, as most of the subjects with which we have been hitherto *entertained.*

Sir Hargrave took an empty glass, and with it humorously rapped his own knuckles, bowed, smiled, and was silent; that act of yielding, which had gracefulness in it, gaining

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more honour to himself, than Mr. Walden obtained by his rebuke of him, however just.

Now, madam, if you please, said Mr. Walden (and he put himself into a disputing attitude), a word or two with you, on your *vehicle*, and so forth.

Pray, spare me, sir: I am willing to sit down quietly. I am unequal to this subject. I have done.

But, said the baronet, you must *not* sit down quietly, madam: Mr. Walden has promised us *edification;* and we all attend the effect of his promise.

No, no, madam, said Mr. Walden, you must not come off so easily. You have thrown out some extraordinary things for a *lady*, and especially for so young a lady. From *you* we expect the opinions of your worthy grandfather, as well as your own notions. He, no doubt, told you, or you have read, that the competition set on foot between the learning of the ancients and moderns, has been the subject of much debate among the learned in the latter end of the last century.

Indeed, sir, I know nothing of the matter. I am *not* learned. My grandfather was chiefly intent to make me an English, and, I may say, a *Bible* scholar. I was very young when I had the misfortune to lose him. My whole endeavour has been since, that the pains he took with me should not be cast away.

I have discovered you, madam, to be a *Parthian* lady. You can fight flying, I see. You must not, I tell you, come off so easily, for what you have thrown out. Let me ask you, Did you ever read 'The Tale of a Tub?'

The baronet laughed out, though evidently in the wrong place.

How apt are laughing spirits, said Mr. Walden, looking solemnly, to laugh, when perhaps they ought—There he stopt—[*to be laughed at*, I suppose he had in his head]. But I will not, however, be laughed out of my question—Have you, madam, read Swift's 'Tale of a Tub?'—There *is* such a book, Sir Hargrave; looking with an air of contempt at the baronet.

I know there is, Mr. Walden, replied the baronet, and again laughed—*Have you*, madam? to me. Pray let us know what Mr. Walden drives at.

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I have, sir.

Why, then, madam, resumed Mr. Walden, you no doubt read, bound up with it, 'The Battle of the Books;' a very fine piece, written in favour of the ancients, and against the moderns; and thence must be acquainted with the famous dispute I mentioned. And this will shew you, that the moderns are but pigmies in science compared with the ancients. And, pray, shall not the knowledge which enables us to understand and to digest the wisdom of these immortal ancients be accounted learning?—Pray, madam, nodding his head, answer me that.

O how these pedants, whispered Sir Hargrave to Mr. Reeves, strut in the livery and brass buttons of the ancients, and call their servility learning!

You are going beyond my capacity, sir. I believe what you say is very just: yet the ancients may be read, I suppose, and not understood—But pray, sir, let the Parthian fly the field. I promise you that she will not return to the charge. *Escape*, not *victory*, is all she contends for.

All in good time, madam—But who, pray, learns the language but with a view to understand the author?

Nobody, I believe, sir. But yet some who read the ancients may fail of improving by them.

I was going to say something further; but the baronet, by his loud and laughing applause, disconcerted me; and I was silent.

And here I must break off, till I return from the play: and then, or in the morning early, I will begin on another sheet.

—o—

LETTER XIII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Now, Lucy, will I resume the thread of an argument, that you, perhaps, will not think worth remembering: yet, as I was called upon by every one to proceed, I would not omit it, were it but to have my uncle's opinion, whether I was not too pert, and too talkative; for my conscience a

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little reproaches me. You know I have told him, that I will not unbespeak my monitor.

Mr. Walden told me, I seemed to think, that the knowledge we gather from the great ancients is hardly worth the pains we take in acquiring the languages in which they wrote.

Not so, sir. I have great respect even for *linguists:* do we not owe to them the translation of the sacred books?—But methinks I could wish that such a distinction should be made between *language* and *science*, as should convince me, that *that* confusion of tongues, which was intended for a punishment of presumption in the early ages of the world, should not be thought to give us our greatest glory in these *more enlightened* times.

Well, madam, ladies must be treated as ladies. But I shall have great pleasure, on my return to Oxford, in being able to acquaint my learned friends, that they must all turn fine gentlemen and *laughers* [Mr. Reeves had smiled as well as the baronet], and despise the great ancients as men of straw, or very shortly they will stand no chance in the ladies' favour.

Good Mr. Walden! Good Mr. Walden! laughed the baronet, shaking his embroidered sides, let me, let me beg your patience, while I tell you, that the young gentlemen at both universities are already in more danger of becoming *fine gentlemen* than *fine scholars*—

And then again he laughed; and looking round him, bespoke, in his usual way, a laugh from the rest of the company.

Mr. Reeves, a little touched at the scholar's reference to him, in the word *laughers*, said, It were to be wished, that, in all nurseries of learning, the *manners of youth* were proposed as the principal end. It is too known a truth, said he, that the attention paid to languages has too generally swallowed up all other and more important considerations; insomuch, that sound morals and good breeding themselves are obliged to give way to that which is of little moment, but as it promotes and inculcates those. And learned men, I am persuaded, if they *dared* to speak out, would not lay so much stress upon mere languages as you seem to do, Mr. Walden.

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Learning, *here*, replied Mr. Walden, a little peevishly, has not a fair tribunal to be tried at. As it is said of the advantages of birth or degree, so it may be said of learning; no one despises it that has pretensions to it. But, proceed, Miss Byron, if you please.

Very true, I believe, sir, said I: but, on the other hand, may not those who have either, or both, value themselves too much on that account?

I knew once, said Miss Clements, an excellent scholar, who thought, that too great a portion of life was bestowed in the learning of languages; and that the works of many of the ancients were more to be admired for the stamp which antiquity has fixed upon them, and for the sake of their purity in languages that cannot alter (and whose works are therefore become the standard of those languages), than for the lights obtained from them by men of genius, in ages that we have reason to think more enlightened, as well by new discoveries as by revelation.

I am even tempted to ask, continued she, Whether the reputation of learning is not oftener acquired by skill in those branches of science which principally serve for amusement to inquisitive and curious minds, than by that in the most useful sort?

Here Mr. Walden interrupted her; and turning to me, as to the weaker adversary; yet with an air that had severity in it; I could *almost* wish, said he (and *but* almost, as you are a *lady*), that you, madam, knew the works of the great ancients in their original languages.

Something, said Miss Clements, should be left for *men* to excel in. I cannot but approve of Mr. Walden's word *almost*.

She then whispered me; Pray, Miss Byron, proceed (for she saw me a little out of countenance at Mr. Walden's severe air)—Strange, added she, still whispering, that people who know least how to argue, should be most eager to dispute. Thank Heaven, all scholars are not like this.

A little encouraged; Pray, sir, said I, let me ask one question—Whether you do not think, that our Milton, in his *Paradise Lost*, shews himself to be a very learned man? And yet that work is written wholly in the language of his

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own country, as the works of Homer and Virgil were in that of theirs:—And they, I presume, will be allowed to be learned men.

Milton, madam, let me tell you, is infinitely obliged to the great ancients; and his very frequent allusions to them, and his knowledge of their mythology, shew that he is.

His knowledge of their mythology, sir!—His own subject so greatly, so nobly, so divinely, above that mythology!—I have been taught to think, by a very learned man, that it was a condescension in Milton to the taste of persons of more reading than genius in the age in which he wrote, to introduce, so often as he does, his allusions to the pagan mythology! and that he neither raised his sublime subject, nor did credit to his vast genius, by it.

Mr. Addison, said Mr. Walden, is a writer admired by the *ladies*. Mr. Addison, madam, as you will find in your Spectators [sneeringly he spoke this], gives but the second place to Milton, on comparing some passages of his with some of Homer.

If Mr. Addison, sir, has not the honour of being admired by the *gentlemen*, as well as by the *ladies*, I dare say Mr. Walden will not allow, that his authority should decide the point in question: and yet, as I remember, he greatly extols Milton.—But I am going out of my depth.—Only permit me to say one thing more—If Homer is to be preferred to Milton, he must be the sublimest of writers; and Mr. Pope, admirable as his translation of the Iliad is said to be, cannot have done him justice.

You seem, madam, to be a very deep *English* scholar. But say you this from your own observation, or from that of any other?

I readily own, that my lights are borrowed, replied I; I owe the observation to my godfather, Mr. Deane. He is a scholar; but as great an admirer of Milton as of any of the ancients. A gentleman, his particular friend, who is as great an admirer of Homer, undertook, from Mr. Pope's translation of the Iliad, to produce passages that in sublimity exceeded any in the Paradise Lost. The gentlemen met at Mr. Deane's house, where I then was. They allowed me to be present; and this was the issue: the gentleman

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went away convinced, that the English poet as much excelled the Grecian in the grandeur of his sentiments, as his subject, founded on the Christian system, surpasses the pagan.

The debate, I have the vanity to think, said Mr. Walden, had I been a party in it, would have taken another turn; for I do insist upon it, that, without the knowledge of the learned languages, a man cannot understand his own.

I opposed Shakespeare to this assertion: but wished, on this occasion, that I had not been a party in this debate; for the baronet was even noisy in his applauses of what I said; and the applauses of empty minds always gives one suspicion of having incurred it by one's over-forwardness.

He drowned the voice of Mr. Walden, who two or three times was earnest to speak; but not finding himself heard, drew up his mouth as if to a contemptuous whistle, shrugged his shoulders, and sat collected in his own conscious worthiness: his eyes, however, were often cast upon the pictures that hung round the room, as much better objects than the living ones before him.

But what extremely disconcerted me, was a freedom of Miss Barnevelt's; taken upon what I last said, and upon Mr. Walden's hesitation, and Sir Hargrave's applauses: she professed that I was able to bring *her own sex* into reputation with her. Wisdom, as I call it, said she, notwithstanding what you have modestly alleged to depreciate your own, when it proceeds through teeth of ivory, and lips of coral, receives a double grace. And then clasping one of her mannish arms around me, she kissed my cheek.

I was surprised, and offended; and with the more reason, as Sir Hargrave, rising from his seat, declared, that since merit was to be approved in that manner, he thought himself obliged to follow so good an example.

I stood up, and said, Surely, sir, my compliance with the rest of the company, too much I fear at my own expense, calls rather for civility than freedom from a gentleman. I beg, Sir Hargrave—There I stopt; and I am sure looked greatly in earnest.

He stood suspended till I had done speaking; and then, bowing, sat down again; but, as Mr. Reeves told me after-

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wards, he whispered a great oath in his ear, and declared, that he beheld with transport his future wife; and cursed himself if he would ever have another; vowing in the same whisper, that were a thousand men to stand in his way, he would not scruple any means to remove them.

Miss Barnevelt only laughed at the freedom she had taken with me. She is a loud and fearless laugher. She hardly knows *how* to smile: for, as soon as anything catches her fancy, her voice immediately bursts her lips, and widens her mouth to its full extent.—Forgive me, Lucy, I believe I am spiteful.

Lady Betty and Miss Clements, in low voices, praised me for my presence of mind, as they called it, in checking Sir Hargrave's forwardness.

Just here, Lucy, I laid down my pen, and stept to the glass, to see whether I could not please myself with a wise frown or two; at least with a solemnity of countenance, that, occasionally, I might dash with it my childishness of look: which certainly encouraged this freedom of Miss Barnevelt. But I could not please myself. My muscles have never been used to anything but smiling: so favoured, so beloved, by every one of my friends; a heart so grateful for all their favours—How can I learn now to frown; or even long to look grave?

All this time the scholar sat *uneasily careless*.

In the meantime, Mr. Reeves, having sent for, from his study, Bishop Burnet's 'History of his own Times,' said he would, by way of moderatorship in the present debate, read them a passage, to which he believed all parties would subscribe: and then read what I will transcribe for you from the conclusion to that performance.

'I have often thought it a great error to waste young 'gentlemen's years so long in learning Latin, by so tedious 'a grammar. I know those who are bred to the profession 'in literature, must have the Latin correctly; and for that 'the rules of grammar are necessary: but these rules are 'not at all requisite to those, who need only so much Latin,

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'as thoroughly to understand and delight in the Roman 'authors and poets.

'But suppose a youth had, either for want of memory, 'or of application, an incurable aversion to Latin, his 'education is not for that to be despaired of: there is 'much noble knowledge to be had in the English and 'French languages: Geography, History, chiefly that of our 'own country, the knowledge of Nature, and the more '*practical* parts of the mathematics (if he has not a genius 'for the *demonstrative*), may make a gentleman very know-'ing, though he has not a word of Latin.' [And why, I would fain know, said Mr. Reeves, not a gentlewoman?] 'There is a fineness of thought, and a nobleness of expres-'sion, indeed, in the Latin authors' [This makes for your argument, Mr. Walden], 'that will make them the enter-'tainment of a man's whole life, if he once understands and 'reads them with delight' [Very well! said Mr. Walden]: 'but, if this cannot be attained to, I would not have it reckoned 'that the education of an ill Latin scholar is to be given over.'

Thus far the bishop.

We all know, proceeded Mr. Reeves, how well Mr. Locke has treated this subject. And he is so far from discouraging the fair sex from learning languages, that he gives us a method, in his treatise of education, by which a mother may not only learn Latin herself, but be able to teach it to her *son*. Be not, therefore, ladies, ashamed either of your talents or acquirements. Only take care, you give not up any knowledge that is more laudable in your sex, and more useful, for learning; and then, I am sure, you will, you *must*, be the more agreeable, the more suitable companions for it, to men of sense. Nor let any man have so narrow a mind as to be apprehensive for his own prerogative, from a learned woman. A woman who does not behave the *better* the more she knows, will make her husband uneasy, and will think as well of herself, were she utterly illiterate; nor would any argument convince her of her duty. Do not men marry with their eyes open? And cannot they court whom they please? A conceited, a vain mind in a woman cannot be hidden. Upon the whole,

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I think it may be fairly concluded, that the more a woman knows, as well as a man, the wiser she will generally be; and the more regard she will have to a man of sense and learning.

Here ended Mr. Reeves.

Mr. Walden was silent; yet shrugged up his shoulders, and seemed unsatisfied.

The conversation then took a more general turn, in which every one bore a part. *Plays, fashion, dress,* and the *public entertainments,* were the subjects.

Miss Cantillon, who had till now sat a little uneasy, seemed resolved to make up for her silence: but did not shine at all where she thought herself most entitled to make a figure.

But Miss Clements really shone. Yet, in the eye of some people, what advantages has folly in a pretty woman, over even wisdom in a plain one! Sir Hargrave was much more struck with the pert things spoken, without fear or wit, by Miss Cantillon, than with the just observations that fell from the lips of Miss Clements.

Mr. Walden made no great figure on these fashionable subjects; no, not on that of the *plays:* for he would needs force into conversation, with a preference to our Shakespeare, his Sophocles, his Euripides, his Terence; of the merits of whose performances, how great soever, no one present but Mr. Reeves and himself could judge, except by translations.

Sir Hargrave spoke well on the subject of the reigning fashions, and on modern dress, so much the foible of the present age.

Lady Betty and Mrs. Reeves spoke very properly of the decency of dress, and propriety of fashions, as well as of public entertainments.

Miss Clements put in here also with advantage to herself.

Nor would Mr. Walden be excluded this topic. But, as the observations he made on it, went no deeper than what it was presumed he might have had at second-hand, he made a worse figure here, than he did on his more favourite subject. He was, however, heard, till he was for bringing in his Spartan jacket (I forget what he called it), descending

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only to the knees of the women, in place of hoops; and the Roman toga for the men.

Miss Barnevelt broke in upon the scholar; but by way of approbation of what he said; and went on with subjects of heroism, without permitting him to rally and proceed, as he seemed inclined to do.

After praising what he had said of the Spartan and Roman dresses, she fell to enumerating *her* heroes, both ancient and modern. Achilles, the savage Achilles, charmed her. Hector, however, was a good *clever* man: yet she could not bear to think of his being so mean as to beg for his life, though of her heroic Achilles. He deserved for it, she said, to have his corpse dragged round the Trojan walls at the wheels of the victor's chariot. Alexander the Great was her dear creature; and Julius Cæsar was *a very pretty fellow*.

These were Miss Barnevelt's *ancient* heroes.

Among the moderns, the great Scanderbeg, our Henry V., Henry IV. of France, Charles XII. of Sweden, and the great Czar Peter, who my grandfather used to say was worth them all, were her favourites.

All this while honest Mr. Singleton had a smile at the service of every speaker, and a loud laugh always ready at the baronet's.

Sir Hargrave seemed not a little pleased with the honest man's complaisance; and always directed himself to him, when he was disposed to be merry.

Laughing, you know, my dear, is almost as catching as gaping, be the subject ever so silly: and more than once he shewed by his eyes, that he could have devoured Miss Cantillon for generally adding her affected te-he (twisting and bridling behind her fan) to his louder hah, hah, hah.

What a length have I run! How does this narrative letter-writing, if one is to enter into minute and characteristic descriptions and conversations, draw one on!—I will leave off for the present: yet have not quite dismissed the company (though I have done with the argument) that I thought to have parted with before I concluded this letter.

But I know I shall please my uncle in the *livelier* parts

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of it, by the handle they will give him against his poor niece. My grandmother, and aunt Selby, will be pleased, and so will *you*, my Lucy, with *all* I write, for the writer's sake: such is their and your partial love to

Their and your ever-grateful

HARRIET.

—o—

LETTER XIV.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

BY the time tea was ready, Lady Betty whisperingly congratulated me on having made so considerable a conquest, as she was sure I had, by Sir Hargrave's looks.

She took notice also of a gallant expression of his, uttered, as she would have it, with an earnestness that gave it a meaning beyond a common compliment. My cousin Reeves had asked Miss Clements if she could commend to me an honest, modest man-servant? *I*, said Sir Hargrave, *can*, I myself shall be proud to wear Miss Byron's livery; and that for life.

Miss Cantillon, who was within hearing of this, and had seemed to be highly taken with the baronet, could hardly let her eyes be civil to me; and yet her really pretty mouth, *occasionally*, worked itself into forced smiles, and an affectation of complaisance.

Sir Hargrave was extremely obsequious to me all the tea-time; and seemed in *earnest* a little uneasy in himself: and after tea he took my cousin Reeves into the next room; and there made your Harriet the subject of a serious conversation; and desired his interest with me.

He prefaced his declaration to Mr. Reeves, with assuring him, that he had sought for an opportunity more than once, to be admitted into my company, when he was last at Northampton; and that he had not intruded himself then into this company, had he not heard I was to be there.

He made protestations of his honourable views; which looked as if he thought they might be doubted, if he had

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not given such assurances. A tacit implication of an imagined superiority, as well in consequence as fortune.

Mr. Reeves told him, it was a rule which all my relations had set themselves, not to interfere with my choice, let it be placed on whom it would.

Sir Hargrave called himself a *happy man* upon this intelligence.

He afterwards, on his return to the company, found an opportunity, as Mrs. Reeves and I were talking at the further part of the room, in very vehement terms, to declare himself to me an admirer of perfections of his own creation; for he volubly enumerated many; and begged my permission to pay his respects to me at Mr. Reeves's.

Mr. Reeves, Sir Hargrave, said I, will receive what visits he pleases in his own house. I have no permission to give.

He bowed, and made me a very high compliment, taking what I said for a permission.

What, Lucy, can a woman do with these self-flatterers?

Mr. Walden took his leave: Sir Hargrave his: he wanted, I saw, to speak to me, at his departure; but I gave him no opportunity.

Mr. Singleton seemed also inclined to go, but knew not how; and having lost the benefit of their example by his irresolution, sat down.

Lady Betty then repeated her congratulations. How many ladies, said she, and fine ladies too, have sighed in secret for Sir Hargrave! You will have the glory, Miss Byron, of fixing the wavering heart of a man who has done, and is capable of doing, a great deal of mischief.

The ladies, madam, said I, who can sigh in secret for such a man as Sir Hargrave, must either deserve a great deal of pity, or none at all.

Sir Hargrave, said Miss Cantillon, is a very fine gentleman; and so looked upon, I assure you: and he has a noble estate.

It is very happy, replied I, that we do not all of us like the same person. I mean not to disparage Sir Hargrave; but I have compassion for the ladies who sigh for him in secret. One woman only can be his wife; and perhaps she will not be one of those who sigh for him; especially were he to know that she does.

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Perhaps not, replied Miss Cantillon: but I do assure you that *I* am not one of those who sigh for Sir Hargrave.

The ladies smiled.

I am glad of it, madam, said I. Every woman should have her heart in her own keeping, till she can find a worthy man to bestow it upon.

Miss Barnevelt took a tilt in heroics.

Well, ladies, said she, you may talk of love, and love as much as you please; but it is my glory, that I never knew what love was. I, for my part, like a *brave* man, a *gallant* man: one in whose loud praise fame has cracked half a dozen trumpets. But as to your milksops, your dough-baked lovers, who stay at home and strut among the women, when glory is to be gained in the martial field; I despise them with all my heart. I have often wished that the foolish heads of such fellows as these were cut off in time of war, and sent over to the heroes to fill their cannon with, when they batter in breach, by way of saving ball.

I am afraid, said Lady Betty, humouring this romantic speech, that if the heads of such persons were as soft as we are apt sometimes to think them, they would be of as little service abroad as they are at home.

Oh, madam, replied Miss Barnevelt, there is a good deal of lead in the heads of these fellows. But were their brains, said the shocking creature, if any they have, made to fly about the ears of an enemy, they would serve both to blind and terrify him.

Even Mr. Singleton was affected with this horrid speech; for he clapped both his hands to his head, as if he were afraid of his brains.

Lady Betty was very urgent with us to pass the evening with her; but we excused ourselves; and when we were in the coach, Mr. Reeves told me, that I should find the baronet a very troublesome and resolute lover, if I did not give him countenance.

And so sir, said I, you would have me do, as I have heard many a good woman *has* done, marry a man, in order to get rid of his importunity.

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And a certain cure too, let me tell you, cousin, said he, smiling.

We found at home, waiting for Mr. Reeves's return, Sir John Allestree: a worthy sensible man, of plain and unaffected manners, upwards of fifty.

Mr. Reeves mentioning to him our past entertainment and company, Sir John gave us such an account of Sir Hargrave, as helped me not only in the character I have given of him, but let me know that he is a very dangerous and enterprising man. He says, that laughing and light as he is in company, he is malicious, ill-natured, and designing; and sticks at nothing to carry a point on which he has once set his heart. He has ruined, Sir John says, three young creatures already under vows of marriage.

Sir John spoke of him as a managing man, as to his fortune: he said, that though he would, at times, be lavish in the pursuit of his pleasures; yet that he had some narrownesses, which made him despised, and that most by those for whose regard a good man would principally wish; his neighbours and tenants.

Could you have thought, my Lucy, that this laughing, fine-dressing man, could have been a man of malice; of resentment; of enterprise; a cruel man? Yet Sir John told two very bad stories of him, besides what I have mentioned, which prove him to be all I have said.

But I had no need of these stories to determine me against receiving his addresses. What I saw of him was sufficient; though Sir John made no manner of doubt (on being told by Mr. Reeves, in confidence, of his application to him for leave to visit me), that he was quite in earnest; and, making me a compliment, added, that he knew Sir Hargrave was inclined to marry; and the more, as one half of his estate, on failure of issue male, would go at his death to a distant relation whom he hated; but for no other reason than for admonishing him, when a school-boy, on his low and mischievous pranks.

His estate, Sir John told my cousin, is full as considerable as reported. And Mr. Reeves, after Sir John went away, said, What a glory will it be to you, cousin Byron, to reform such a man, and make his great fortune a blessing to multi-

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tudes; as I am sure would be your endeavour to do, were you Lady Pollexfen!

But, my Lucy, were Sir Hargrave king of one half of the globe, I would not go to the altar with him.

But if he be a very troublesome man, what shall I say to him? I can deal pretty well with those who will be kept at arm's length; but I own I should be very much perplexed with resolute wretches. The civility I think myself obliged to pay every one who professes a regard for me, might subject me to inconveniences with violent spirits, which, protected as I have been by my uncle Selby, and my good Mr. Deane, I never yet have known. Oh, my Lucy! to what evils, but for that protection, might not I, a sole, an independent young woman, have been exposed! since men, many men, are to be looked upon as savages, as wild beasts of the desert: and a single and independent woman they hunt after as their proper prey.

To have done with Sir Hargrave for the present, and I wish I may be able to say for ever: early in the morning a billet was brought from him to Mr. Reeves, excusing himself from paying him a visit that morning, as he had intended, by reason of the sudden and desperate illness of a relation, whose seat was near Reading, with whom he had large concerns, and who was desirous to see him before he died. As it was impossble that he could return under three days, which, he said, would appear as three years to him, and he was obliged to set out that moment; he could not dispense with himself for putting in his *claim*, as he called it, to Miss Byron's favour, and confirming his declaration of yesterday. In very high strains, he professed himself her admirer: and begged Mr. and Mrs. Reeves's interest with her. One felicity, he said, he hoped for from his absence, which was, that as Miss Byron, and Mr. and Mrs. Reeves, would have time to consider of his offers; he presumed to hope he should not be subjected to a repulse.

And now, my Lucy, you have before you as good an account as I can give you of my two new lovers.

How I shall manage with them, I know not: but I begin to think that those young women are happiest, whose

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friends take all the trouble of this sort upon *them*; only consulting their daughters' inclinations as preliminaries are adjusting.

My friends, indeed, pay a high compliment to my discretion, when they so generously allow me to judge for myself: and we young women are fond of being our own mistresses: but I must say, that to *me* this compliment has been, and is, a painful one; for two reasons; that I cannot but consider their goodness as a task upon me, which requires my utmost circumspection, as well as gratitude; and that they have shewn more generosity in dispensing with their authority, than I have done, whenever I have acted so as to appear, though *but* to appear, to accept of the dispensation: let me add, besides, that now, when I find myself likely to be addressed to by mere strangers, by men who grew not into my knowledge insensibly, as our neighbours Greville, Fenwick, and Orme, did, I cannot but think it has the appearance of confidence, to stand out to receive, as a creature uncontrollable, the first motions to an address of this awful nature. Awful indeed might it be called, were one's heart to incline towards a particular person.

Allow me then, for the future, my revered grandmamma, and you my beloved and equally honoured uncle and aunt Selby, allow me to refer myself to you, if any person offers to whom I may happen to have no strong objections. As to Mr. Fowler, and the baronet, I must *now* do as well as I can with them. It is much easier for a young woman to say *no*, than *yes*. But for the time to come I will not have the assurance to act for myself. I know your partiality for your Harriet too well, to doubt the merit of your recommendation.

As Mr. and Mrs. Reeves require me to shew them what I write, they are fond of indulging me in the employment: you will therefore be the less surprised that I write so much in so little a time. *Miss Byron is in her closet; Miss Byron is writing;* is an excuse sufficient, they seem to think, to everybody, because they allow it to be one to them: but besides, I know they believe they oblige you all by the opportunity they so kindly give me of shewing my duty and love where so justly due.

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I am, however, surprised at casting my eye back. Two sheets! and such a quantity before!—Unconscionable, say; and let me, echo-like, repeat,

Unconscionable

HARRIET BYRON.

Sunday Night.

Letters from Northamptonshire, by Farmer Jenkins! I kiss the seals. What agreeable things, now, has my Lucy to say to her Harriet? Disagreeable ones she cannot write, if all my beloved friends are well.

—o—

LETTER XV.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Monday, February 6.

AND so my uncle Selby, you tell me, is making observations in writing, on my letters; and waits for nothing more to begin with me, than my conclusion of the conversations that offered at Lady Betty's.

And is it expected that I should go on furnishing weapons against myself?

It is.

Well; with all my heart. As long as I can contribute to his amusement; as long as my grandmamma is pleased and diverted with what I write, as well as with his pleasantries on her girl; I will proceed.

Well, but will you not, my Harriet, methinks you ask, write with less openness, with more reserve, in apprehension of the rod which you know hangs over your head?

Indeed I will not. It is my glory, that I have not a thought in my heart which I would conceal from any one whom it imported to know it, and who would be gratified by the revealing of it. And yet I am a little chagrined at the wager which you tell me my uncle has actually laid with my grandmamma, that I shall not return from London with a sound heart.

And does he tease *you*, my Lucy, on this subject, with

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reminding you of your *young* partiality for Captain Duncan, in order to make good his assertion of the susceptibility of us all?

Why so let him. And why should you deny, that you *were* susceptible of a natural passion? You must not be prudish, Lucy. If you are *not*, all his raillery will lose its force.

What better assurance can I give to my uncle, and to all my friends, that if I were caught, I would own it, than by advising you *not* to be ashamed to confess a sensibility which is no disgrace, when duty and prudence are our guides, and the object worthy?

Your man indeed was *not* worthy, as it proved: but he was a very specious creature; and you knew not his bad character, when you suffered *liking* to grow into *love*.

But when the love fever was at the height, did you make anybody uneasy with your passion? Did you run to the woods and groves, to record it on the barks of trees?—No!—You sighed in silence indeed: but it was but for a little while. I got your secret from you; not, however, till it betrayed itself in your pined countenance; and then the man's discovered unworthiness, and your own discretion, enabled you to conquer a passion to which you had given way, supposing it unconquerable, because you thought it would cost you pains to contend with it.

As to myself, you know I have hitherto been on my guard. I have been careful ever to shut the door of my heart against the blind deity, the moment I could imagine him setting his encroaching foot on the *threshold*, which I think *liking* may be called. Had he once gained entrance, perhaps I might have come off but simply.

But I hope I am in the less danger of falling in love with *any* man, as I can be civil and courteous to *all*. When a stream is sluiced off into several channels, there is the less fear that it will overflow its banks. I really think I never shall be in love with anybody, till duty directs inclination.

Excuse me, Lucy. I do now and then, you know, get into a boasting humour. But then my punishment, as in most other cases, follows my fault: my uncle pulls me down, and shews me, that I am not half so good as the rest of my friends think me.

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You tell me, that Mr. Greville will be in London in a very few days. I can't help it. He pretends business, you say; and, since that calls him up, intends to give himself a month's pleasure in town, and to take his share of the public entertainments. Well, so let him. But I hope that I am not to be either his business or entertainment. After a civil neighbourly visit, or so, I hope I shall not be tormented with him.

What happened once betwixt Mr. Fenwick and him, gave me pain enough; exposed me enough, surely! A young woman, though without her own fault, made the occasion of a rencounter between two men of fortune, must be talked of too much for her own liking, or she must be a strange creature. What numbers of people has the unhappy rashness of those two men brought to stare at me! And with what difficulty did my uncle and Mr. Deane bring them into so odd a compromise, as they at last came into, to torment me, as I may call it, by joint consent, notwithstanding all I could say to them; which was the only probable way, shocking creatures! to prevent murder!

But, Lucy, what an odd thing is it in my uncle, to take hold of what I said in one of my letters, that I had a good mind to give you a sketch of what I might suppose the company at Lady Betty's would say of your Harriet, were each to write her character to their confidants or correspondents, as she has done theirs to you!

I think there is a little concealed malice in my uncle's command: but I obey.

To begin then—Lady Betty, who owns she thinks favourably of me, I will suppose would write to her Lucy, in such terms as these; but shall I suppose every one to be so happy, as to have her Lucy?

'Miss Byron, of whom you have heard Mr. Reeves talk 'so much, discredits not, in the *main*, the character he has 'given her. We must allow a little, you know, for the 'fondness of relationship.

'The girl has had a good education, and owes all her 'advantages to it. But it is a country and a bookish one;

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'and that won't do *every* thing for one of our sex, if *any* 'thing. Poor thing! she *never* was in town before!—But 'she seems docile, and, for a country girl, is tolerably 'genteel: I think, therefore, I shall receive no discredit by 'introducing her into the beau monde.'

Miss Clements, perhaps, agreeably to the goodness of her kind heart, would have written thus:

'Miss Byron is an agreeable girl: she has invited me to 'visit her; and I hope I shall like her better and better. 'She has, one may see, kept worthy persons company: and, 'I daresay, will deserve the improvement she has gained by 'it. She is lively and obliging: she is young; not more 'than twenty; yet looks rather younger, by reason of a 'country bloom, which, however, misbecomes her not; and 'gives a modesty to her first appearance, that possesses one 'in her favour. What a castaway would Miss Byron be, 'if knowing so well, as she seems to know, what the duty 'of others is, she should forget her own!'

Miss Cantillon would perhaps thus write:

'There was Miss Harriet Byron of Northamptonshire; a 'young woman in whose favour report has been very lavish. 'I can't say that I think her so *very* extraordinary: yet she 'is well enough for a country girl. But though I do not 'impute to her a *very* pert look, yet if she had not been set 'up for something beyond what she is, by all her friends, 'who, it seems, are *excessively* fond of her, she might have 'had a more humble opinion of herself than she seems to 'have when she is set a talking. She may, indeed, make a 'figure in a country assembly; but in the London world 'she must not be a little awkward, having never been 'here before.

'I take her to have a great deal of art. But, to do her 'justice, she has no bad complexion: that, you know, is 'a striking advantage: but to me she has a babyish look, 'especially when she smiles; yet I suppose she has been told 'that her smiles become her; for she is always smiling—so 'like a simpleton, I was going to say!

'Upon the whole, I see nothing so engaging in her as to

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'have made her the idol she is with everybody—and what 'little beauty she has, it cannot last. For my part, were 'I a man, the clear brunette—but you will think I am 'praising myself.'

Miss Barnevelt would perhaps thus write to her Lucy—To *her* Lucy—upon my word I will not let her have a Lucy—she shall have a brother *man* to write to, not a woman, and he shall have a fierce name.

We will suppose, that she also had been describing the rest of the company:

'Well but, my dear Bombardino, I am now to give you 'a description of Miss Byron. 'Tis the softest, gentlest, 'smiling rogue of a girl—I protest, I could five or six times 'have kissed her, for what she said, and for the manner she 'spoke in—for she has been used to prate; a favoured child 'in her own family, one may easily see that. Yet so '*prettily* loth to speak till spoken to!—Such a blushing 'little rogue!—'Tis a dear girl! and I wished twenty times, 'as I sat by her, that I had been a man for her sake—Upon 'my honour, Bombardino, I believe if I had, I should have 'caught her up, popt her under one of my arms, and run 'away with her.'

Something like this, my Lucy, did Miss Barnevelt once say.

Having now dismissed the women, I come to Mr. Singleton, Mr. Walden, and Sir Hargrave.

Mr. Walden (himself a Pasquin) would thus perhaps have written to his Marforio:

'The first lady, whom, as the greatest stranger, I shall 'take upon me to describe, is Miss Harriet Byron of 'Northamptonshire. In her person she is not disagreeable; 'and most people think her pretty. But, what is prettiness? 'Why, nevertheless, in a woman, prettiness is—*pretty:* 'what other word can I so fitly use of a person, who, 'though a little *sightly*, cannot be called a beauty?

'I will allow, that we men are not wrong in admiring '*modest* women for the graces of their *persons:* but let

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'them *be* modest; let them return the compliment; and 'revere *us* for our capaciousness of *mind:* and so they 'will, if they are brought up to know their own weakness, 'and that they are but domestic animals of a superior 'order. Even ignorance, let me tell you, my Marforio, is 'pretty in a woman. Humility is one of their principal 'graces. Women hardly ever set themselves to acquire 'the knowledge that is proper to men, but they neglect for 'it, what more indispensably belongs to women. To have 'them come to their husbands, to their brothers, and even 'to their lovers, when they have a mind to know anything 'out of the way, and beg to be instructed and informed, 'inspireth them with the becoming humility which I have 'touched upon, and giveth us importance with them.

'Indeed, my Marforio, there are very few topics that 'arise in conversation among men, upon which women 'ought to open their lips. Silence becomes them. Let 'them therefore hear, wonder, and improve, in silence. 'They are naturally contentious, and lovers of contra-'diction' [something like this Mr. Walden once threw out: and you know who, my Lucy—but I am afraid—has said as much]: 'and shall we qualify them to be disputants 'against ourselves?

'These reflections, Marforio, are not foreign to my sub-'ject. This girl, this Harriet Byron, is applauded for a 'young woman of reading and observation. But there was 'another lady present, Miss Clements, who (if there be 'any merit to a *woman* in it) appeareth to me to excel 'her in the compass of her reading; and that upon the 'strength of her own diligence and abilities; which is not 'the case with this Miss Harriet; for she, truly, hath had 'some pains taken with her by her late grandfather, a man 'of erudition, who had his education among *us*. This 'old gentleman, I am told, took it into his head, having 'no grandson, to give this girl a *bookish* turn: but he 'wisely stopt at her mother-tongue; only giving her a 'smattering in French and Italian.

'As I saw that the eyes of every one were upon her, I 'was willing to hear what she had to say for herself. 'Poor girl! she will suffer, I doubt, for her speciousness.

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'Yet I cannot say, all things considered, that she was *very* 'malapert: that quality is yet to come. She is young.

'I therefore trifled a little with her: and went further 'than I generally choose to go with the reading species of 'women, in order to divert an inundation of nonsense and 'foppery breaking in from one of the company; Sir Har- 'grave Pollexfen: of whom more anon.

'You know, Marforio, that a man, when he is provoked 'to fight with an overgrown boy, hath everybody against 'him: so hath a scholar who engageth on learned topics 'with a woman. The sex must be flattered at the expense 'of truth. Many things are thought to be pretty from 'the mouth of a woman, which would be egregiously weak 'and silly proceeding from that of a man. His very 'eminence in learning, on such a contention, would tend 'only to exalt her, and depreciate himself. As the girl 'was everybody's favourite, and as the baronet seemed to 'eye her with particular regard, I spared her. A man 'would not, you know, spoil a girl's fortune.'

But how, Lucy, shall I be able to tell you what I imagine Sir Hargrave would have written? Can I do it, if I place him in the light of a lover, and not either underdo his character as such, or incur the censure of vanity and conceit?

Well, but are you sure, Harriet, methinks my uncle asks, that the baronet is really and truly so egregiously smitten with you, as he pretended he was?

Why, ay! That's the thing, sir!

You girls are so apt to take in earnest the compliments made you by men!——

And so we are. But our credulity, my dear sir, is a greater proof of *our* innocence, than men's professions are of *their* sincerity. So, let losers speak, and winners laugh.

But let him be in jest, if he will. In jest or in earnest, Sir Hargrave must be extravagant, I ween, in love-speeches. And that I may not be thought wholly to decline this part of my task, I will suppose him professing with Hudibras, after he has praised me beyond measure, for graces of his own creation;

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The Sun shall now no more dispense
His own, but *Harriet's* influence.
Where'er she treads, her feet shall set
The primrose and the violet:
All spices, perfumes, and sweet powders,
Shall borrow from her breath their odours:
Worlds shall depend upon her eye,
And when she frowns upon them, die.

And what if I make him address me, by way of *apostrophe*, shall I say? (writing to his friend) in the following strain?

My faith [*my friend*] is *adamantine*,
As chains of destiny, I'll maintain;
True, as Apollo ever spoke,
Or oracle from heart of oak:
Then shine upon me but benignly,
With that one, and that other pigsnye:
The sun and day shall sooner part,
Than Love or you shake off my heart.

Well, but what, my Harriet, would honest Mr. Singleton have written, had he written about you?

Why thus, perhaps, my Lucy: and to his grandmother; for she is living:

'We had rare *fun*, at dinner, and after dinner, my 'grandmother.

'There was one Miss Barnevelt, a fine tall *portly* young 'lady.

'There was Miss Clements, not handsome, but very 'learned, and who, as was easy to perceive, could hold a '*good argument*, on occasion.

'There was Miss Cantillon; as pretty a young lady as 'one would wish to behold in a *summer's day*.

'And there was one Miss Byron, a Northamptonshire 'lady, whom I never saw before in my *born days*.

'There was Mr. Walden, a most famous scholar. I 'thought him very entertaining; for he talked of learn-'ing, and such-like things; which I know not so much of 'as I wish I did; because my want of knowing a little 'Latin and Greek has made my understanding *look less* 'than other men's. O my grandmother! what a *wise man* 'would the being able to talk Latin and Greek have

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'made me!—And yet I thought that now and then Mr. 'Walden made too great a *fuss* about *his*.

'But there was a rich and noble baronet; richer than '*me*, as they say a great deal; Sir Hargrove Pollexfun, if 'I spell his name right. A charming man! and charm-'ingly dressed! And so many fine things he said, and was 'so merry, and so facetious, that he did nothing but laugh, '*as a man may say!* And I was as merry as *him* to the 'full. Why not?

'O my grandmother! What with the talk of the young 'country lady, that same Miss Byron; for they put her 'upon talking a great deal; what with the famous scholar, 'who, however, being a learned man, could not be so merry 'as us; what with Sir Hargrave (I could live and die with 'Sir Hargrave: you never knew, my grandmother, such a 'bright man as Sir Hargrave), and what with one thing, 'and what with another, we *boxed it about*, and had rare '*fun*, as I told you—so that when I got home, and went to 'bed, I did nothing but dream of being in the same com-'pany, and three or four times waked myself with laughing.'

There, Lucy!—Will this do for Mr. Singleton? It is not much out of character, I assure you.

Monday Afternoon.

This knight, this Sir Rowland Meredith!—He is below, it seems; his nephew in his hand; Sir Rowland, my Sally tells me, in his gold button and button-hole coat, and full-buckled wig; Mr. Fowler as spruce as a bridegroom.—What shall I do with Sir Rowland?

I should be sorry to displease the good old man; yet how can I avoid it?

Expect another letter next post: and so you will, if I did not bid you; for have I missed one yet?

Adieu, my LUCY.

H. B.

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LETTER XVI.

Miss Byron to Miss Selby.

Monday Night—Tuesday Morning, February 6–7.

SIR ROWLAND and his nephew, tea being not quite ready, sat down with my cousins; and the knight, leaving Mr. Fowler little to say, expatiated so handsomely on his nephew's good qualities, and great passion for me, and on what he himself proposed to do for him in addition to his own fortune, that my cousins, knowing I liked not the gentlemen in our neighbourhood, and thought very indifferently of Sir Hargrave, were more than half inclined to promote the addresses of Mr. Fowler; and gave them both room to think so.

This favourable disposition set the two gentlemen up. They were impatient for tea, that they might see me.

By the time I had sealed up my letters, word was brought me that tea was ready; and I went down.

The knight, it seems, as soon as they heard me coming, jogged Mr. Fowler.—Nephew, said he, pointing to the door, see what you can say to the primrose of your heart! This is now the primrose season with us in Caermarthen, Mr. Reeves.

Mr. Fowler, by a stretch of complaisance, came to meet and introduce me to the company, though at home. The knight nodded his head after him, smiling; as if he had said, let my nephew alone to gallant the lady to her seat.

I was a little surprised at Mr. Fowler's approaching me the moment I appeared, and with his taking my hand, and conducting me to my seat, with an air; not knowing how much he had been raised by the conversation that had passed before.

He bowed. I courtesied, and looked a little sillier than ordinary, I believe.

Your servant, young lady, said the knight. Lovelier, and lovelier, by mercy! How these blushes become that sweet face!—But, forgive me, madam, it is not my intent to dash you.

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Writing, Miss Byron, all day! said Mrs. Reeves. We have greatly missed you.

My cousin seemed to say this, on purpose to give me time to recover myself.

I have blotted several sheets of paper, said I, and had just concluded.

I hope, madam, said the knight, leaning forward his whole body, and peering in my face under his bent brows, that *we* have not been the cause of hastening you down.

I stared. But as he seemed not to mean anything, I would not help him to a meaning by my own over-quickness.

Mr. Fowler had done an extraordinary thing, and sat down, hemmed, and said nothing: looking, however, as if he was at a loss to know whether he or his uncle was expected to speak.

The cold weather was then the subject; and the two gentlemen rubbed their hands, and drew nearer the fire, as if they were the colder for talking of it. Many hems passed between them, now the uncle looking on the nephew, now the nephew on the uncle: at last they fell into talk of their new-built house at Caermarthen, and the furnishing of it.

They mentioned afterwards their genteel neighbourhood, and gave the characters of half a dozen people, of whom none present but themselves ever heard; but all tending to shew how much they were valued by the best gentry in Caermarthenshire.

The knight then related a conversation that had once passed between himself and the late Lord Mansell, in which that nobleman had complimented him on an estate of a clear £3000 a year, besides a good deal of ready cash, and with supposing that he would set up his nephew, when of age (for it was some years ago), as a representative for the county. And he repeated the *prudent* answer he gave his lordship, disavowing such a design, as no better than a gaming *propensity*, as he called it, which had ruined many a fair estate.

This sort of talk, in which his nephew *could* bear a part (and indeed they had it all between them), held the tea-time; and then having given themselves the consequence they had seemed to intend, the knight, drawing his chair nearer to me, and winking to his nephew, who withdrew, began to set

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forth to me the young gentleman's good qualities; to declare the passion he had for me; and to beg my encouragement of so worthy, so *proper*, and so *well-favoured* a young man: who was to be his sole heir; and for whom he would do such things, on my account, as, during his life, he would not do for any other woman *breathing*.

There was no answering a discourse so serious, with the air of levity which it was hardly possible to avoid assuming on the first visit of the knight.

I was vexed that I found myself almost as bashful, as silly, and as silent, as if I had thoughts of encouraging Mr. Fowler's addresses. My cousins seemed pleased with my bashfulness. The knight, I once thought, by the tone of his voice, and his hum, would have struck up a Welsh tune, and dance for joy.

Shall I call in my kinsman, madam, to confirm all I have said, and to pour out his whole soul at your feet? My boy is bashful: but a little favour from that sweet countenance will make a man of him. Let me, let me, call in my boy. I will go for him myself; and was going.

Let me say one word, Sir Rowland—before Mr. Fowler comes in—before you speak to him—you have explained yourself unexceptionably. I am obliged to you and Mr. Fowler for your good opinion: but this can never be.

How, madam? Can *never* be!—I will allow that you shall take time for half a dozen visits, or so, that you may be able to judge of my nephew's qualities and understanding, and be convinced from his own mouth, and heart, and soul, as I may say, of his love for you. No need of time for *him*. He, poor man! is fixed, immoveably fixed: but say you will take a week's time, or so, to consider what you *can* do, what you *will* do—and that's all I at present crave, or indeed, madam, can *allow* you.

I cannot doubt *now*, Sir Rowland, of what my mind will be a week hence, as to this matter.

How, madam!—Why, we are all in the *suds*, then!—Why, Mr. Reeves, Mrs. Reeves!—Whew! with a half-whistle—Why, madam, we shall, at this rate, be all *untwisted!* But (after a pause) by mercy I will not be thus answered!—Why, madam, would you have the conscience

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to break my poor boy's heart?—Come, be as gracious as you look to be—Give me your hand—[he snatched my hand: in respect to his years I withdrew it not]—and give my boy your heart.—Sweet soul! such sensible, such good-natured mantlings!—Why you can't be cruel if you would?—Dear lady! say you will take a little time to consider of this matter; don't repeat those cruel words, 'it can never 'be.'—What have you to object to my boy?

Mr. Fowler, both by character and appearance, Sir Rowland, is a worthy man. He is a modest man; and modesty——

Well, and so he is—Mercy! I was afraid that his modesty would be an objection——

It cannot, Sir Rowland, with a modest woman. I love, I revere a modest man: but, indeed, I cannot *give* hope, where I mean not to *encourage* any.

Your objection, madam, to my nephew?—You must have seen something in him you dislike.

I do not easily *dislike*, sir; but then I do not easily *like*: and I never will marry any man, to whom I cannot be more than indifferent.

Why, madam, he adores you—He——

That, sir, is an objection, unless I could return his love. My gratitude would be endangered.

Excellent notions!—With these notions, madam, you could not be ungrateful.

That, sir, is a risk I will never run. How many bad wives are there, who would have been good ones, had they not married either to their dislike, or with indifference? Good beginnings, Sir Rowland, are necessary to good progresses, and to happy conclusions.

Why, so they are. But beginnings that are *not* bad with good people, will make no *bad* progresses, no *bad* conclusions.

No *bad* is not *good*, Sir Rowland; and, in such a world as this, shall people lay themselves open to the danger of acting contrary to their duty? Shall they suffer themselves to be bribed, either by conveniencies, or superfluities, to give their hands, and leave their hearts doubtful or indifferent? It would not be honest to do so.

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You told me, madam, the first time I had the honour to see you, that you were absolutely and *bona fide* disengaged——

I told you truth, sir.

Then, madam, we will *not* take your denial. We will persevere. We will *not* be discouraged! What a *deuse!* Have I not heard it said, that *faint heart never won fair lady?*

I never would give an absolute denial, sir, were I to have the least doubt of my mind. If I could balance, I would consult my friends, and refer to them, and their opinion should have due weight with me. But for your *nephew's* sake, Sir Rowland, while his esteem for me is young and conquerable, urge not this matter farther. I would not give pain to a worthy heart.

As I hope for mercy, madam, so well do I like your notions, that if you will be my niece, and let me but converse with you once a day, I will be content with £100 a year, and settle upon you all I have in the world.

His eyes glistened; his face glowed; an honest earnestness appeared in his countenance.

Generous man! Good Sir Rowland! said I. I was affected. I was forced to withdraw.

I soon returned, and found Sir Rowland, his handkerchief in his hand, applying very earnestly to my cousins: and they were so much affected too, that, on his resuming the subject to me, they could not help putting in a word or two on his side of the question.

Sir Rowland then proposed to call on his nephew, that he might speak for himself. My boy may be overawed by love, madam: true love is always fearful: yet he is no milksop, I do assure you. To *men* he has courage. How he will behave to *you*, madam, I know not; for, really, notwithstanding that sweetness of aspect, which I should have thought would have led one to say what one would to you (in modesty, I mean), I have now a kind of I cannot tell what for you myself. Reverence it is not, neither, I think —I only reverence my Maker—and yet I believe it is. Why, madam, your face is one of God Almighty's wonders in a little compass!—Pardon me—you may blush—but *be*

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gracious now!—Don't shew us, that, with a face so encouragingly tender, you have a hard heart.

Oh, Sir Rowland! you are an excellent advocate: but pray tell Mr. Fowler——

I will call him in—and was rising.

No, don't—but tell Mr. Fowler, that I regard him on a double account; for his own worth's sake, and for his uncle's: but subject me not, I once more entreat you, to the pain of repulsing a worthy man. I repeat, that I am under obligation to him for the value he has for me: I shall be under more, if he will accept of my thanks as all I have to return.

My dear Miss Byron, said Mr. Reeves, oblige Sir Rowland so far, as to take a little time to consider——

God bless you on earth and in heaven, Mr. Reeves, for this! you are a good man—Why, ay, take a little time to consider—God bless you, madam, take a little time. Say you will consider. You know not what a man of understanding my nephew is. Why, madam, modest as he is, and awed by his love for you, he cannot shew half the good sense he is master of.

Modest men must have merit, sir. But how *can* you, Mr. Reeves, make a difficult task more difficult? And yet all is from the goodness of your heart. You see Sir Rowland thinks me cruel: I have no cruelty in my nature. I love to oblige. I wish to match *you* in generosity, Sir Rowland—ask me for anything but *myself*, and I will endeavour to oblige you.

Admirable, by mercy! Why, everything you say, instead of making me desist, induces me to persevere. There is no yielding up such a prize, if one can obtain it. Tell me, Mr. Reeves, where there is such another woman to be had, and we may give up Miss Byron: but I hope she will consider of it.—Pray, madam—but I will call in my nephew. And out he went in haste, as if he were afraid of being again forbidden.

Meantime, my cousins put it to me—but before I could answer them, the knight, followed by his nephew, returned.

Mr. Fowler entered, bowing in the most respectful manner. He looked much more dejected than when he approached

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me at my first coming down. His uncle had given him a hint of what had passed between us.

Mr. Fowler and I had just sat down, when the knight said to Mr. Reeves (but took him not by the button, as in his first visit), one word with you, sir—Mr. Reeves, one word with you, if you please.

They withdrew together: and presently after Mrs. Reeves went out at the other door: and I was left alone with Mr. Fowler.

We both sat silent for about three or four minutes. I thought I ought not to begin: Mr. Fowler knew not how, He drew his chair nearer to me; then sat a little farther off; then drew a little nearer again; stroked his ruffles, and hemmed two or three times; and at last,—You cannot, madam, but observe my confusion, my concern, my, my, my confusion!—It is owing to my reverence, my respect, my *reverence*, for you—hem!—He gave two gentle hems, and was silent.

I could not enjoy the modest man's awkwardness.—Every feature of his face working, his hands and his knees trembling, and his tongue faltering, how barbarous had I been if I could.—O, Lucy! what a disqualifier is love, if such agitations as these are the natural effects of *that* passion!

Sir Rowland has been acquainting me, sir, said I, with the good opinion you have of me. I am very much obliged to you for it. I have been telling Sir Rowland—

Ah! madam! say not what you have been telling Sir Rowland: he has hinted it to me. I must indeed confess my unworthiness; yet I cannot forbear aspiring to your favour. Who that knows what will make him the happiest of men, however unworthy he may be, can forbear seeking his happiness? I can only say, I am the most miserable of men, if——

Good Mr. Fowler, interrupted I, indulge not a hope that cannot be answered. I will not pretend to say, that I should not merit your esteem, if I could return it; because to whomsoever I should give my hand, I would make it a point of duty to deserve his affection: but for that very reason, and that I may have no temptation to do otherwise, I must

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be convinced in my own mind that there is not a man in the world whom I could value more than him I chose.

He sighed. I was *assured*, madam, said he, that your heart was absolutely disengaged: on that assurance I founded my presumptuous hope.

And so it is, Mr. Fowler. I have never seen a man whom I could wish to marry.

Then, madam, may I not hope, that time, that my assiduities, that my profound reverence, my unbounded love—

Oh, Mr. Fowler, think me not either insensible or ungrateful. But time, I am sure, can make no alteration in this case. I can only esteem *you*, and that from a motive which I think has selfishness in it, because you have shown a regard for *me*.

No selfishness in this motive, madam; it is amiable gratitude. And if all the services of my life, if all the adoration——

I have a very indifferent notion of sudden impressions, Mr. Fowler: but I will not question the sincerity of a man I think so worthy. Sir Rowland has been very urgent with me: he has wished me to take time to consider. I have told him I *would*, if I could doubt: but that I cannot. For *your own* sake, therefore, let me entreat you to place your affections elsewhere. And may you place them happily!

You have, madam, I am afraid, seen men whom you could prefer to me——

Our acquaintance, Mr. Fowler, is very short. It would be no wonder if I had. Yet I told you truly, that I never yet saw a man whom I could wish to marry.

He looked down, and sighed.

But, Mr. Fowler, to be still more frank and explicit with you, as I think you a very worthy man; I will own, that were any of the gentlemen I have hitherto known to be my lot, it must be, I think, in compassion (in *gratitude*, I had almost said), one (who nevertheless it cannot be) who has professed a love for me ever since I was a child. A man of honour, of virtue, of modesty; such a man as I believe Mr. Fowler is. His fortune indeed is not so considerable as Sir Rowland says yours will be: but, sir, as there is no other reason, on the comparison, why I should prefer Mr. Fowler

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to him, I should think the worse of myself as long as I lived, if I gave a preference over such a tried affection to fortune only. And now, sir, I expect that you will make a generous use of my frankness, lest the gentleman, if you should know him, may hear of it. And this I request for *his sake*, as I think I never can be his; as for *yours*, I have been thus explicit.

I can only say, that I am the most miserable of men!—But will you, madam, give me leave to visit Mr. Reeves now and then?

Not on my account, Mr. Fowler. Understand it so; and if you see me, let it be with indifference, and without expectation from me; and I shall always behave myself to you, as to a man who has obliged me by his good opinion.

He bowed: sat in silence: pulled out his handkerchief—I pitied him.

But let me ask all you, my friends, who love Mr. Orme, was I wrong? I think I never could love Mr. Fowler, as a wife ought to do her husband—May he meet with a worthy woman who can! And surely so good, so modest a man, and of such an ample fortune, easily may: while it may be my lot, if ever I marry, to be the wife of a man, with whom I may not be so happy, as either Mr. Orme or Mr. Fowler would probably make me, could I prevail upon myself to be the wife of either.—O my uncle! often do I reflect on your mercer's shop.

Mr. Fowler arose, and walked disconsolately about the room, and often profoundly, and, I believe (*not* Greville-like), sincerely sighed. His motion soon brought in the knight and Mr. Reeves at one door, and Mrs. Reeves at the other.

Well! What news? What news?—Good, I hope, said the knight, with spread hands—Ah, my poor boy! Thus à la mort! Surely, madam——

There he stopt, and looked wistfully at me; then at my cousins—Mr. Reeves, Mrs. Reeves, speak a good word for my boy. The heart that belongs to that countenance cannot be adamant surely.—Dear young lady, let your power be equalled by your mercy.

Mr. Fowler, Sir Rowland, has too much generosity to

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upbraid me, I dare say. Nor will you think me either perverse or ungenerous when he tells you what has passed between us.¶

Have you given him hope, then? God grant it, though but distant hope! Have you said you will consider.—Dear, blessed lady!——

O sir, interrupted I, how good you are to your nephew! How worthily is your love placed on him! What a proof is it of *his* merit, and of the goodness of *your* heart!—I shall always have an esteem for you both!—Your excuse, Sir Rowland: yours, Mr. Fowler. Be so good as to allow me to withdraw.

I retired to my own apartment, and throwing myself into a chair, reflected on what had passed; and after a while recollected myself to begin to write it down for you.

As soon as I had withdrawn, Mr. Fowler, with a sorrowful heart, as my cousins told me, related all that I had said to him.

Mr. Reeves was so good as to praise me for what he called my generosity to Mr. Orme, as well as for my frankness and civility to Mr. Fowler.

That was the deuse of it, Sir Rowland said, that, were they to have no remedy, they could not find any fault in me to comfort themselves with.

They put it over and over to my cousin, whether time and assiduity might not prevail with me to change my mind? And whether an application to my friends in the country might not, on setting everything fairly before them, be of service? But Mr. Reeves told them, that now I had opened so freely my mind, and had spoken so unexpectedly, yet so gratefully, in favour of Mr. Orme, he feared there could be no hopes.

However, both gentlemen, at taking leave, recommended themselves to Mr. and Mrs. Reeves for their interest; and the knight vowed that I should not come off so easily.

So much, and adieu, my Lucy, for the addresses of worthy Mr. Fowler. Pray, however, for your Harriet, that she may not draw a worse lot.

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Tuesday Morning.

At a private concert last night with my cousins and Miss Clements; and again to be at a play this night; I shall be a racketer, I doubt.

Mr. Fowler called here this morning. Mrs. Reeves and I were out on a visit. But Mr. Reeves was at home, and they had a good deal of discourse about me. The worthy man spoke so despairingly of his success with me, that I hope, for his own sake, I shall hear no more of his addresses; and with the more reason, as Sir Rowland will in a few days set out for Caermarthen.

Sir Rowland called afterwards: but Mr. Reeves was abroad; and Mrs. Reeves and I were gone to Ludgatehill, to buy a gown, which is to be made up all in haste, that I may the more fashionably attend Lady Betty Williams to some of the public entertainments. I have been very extravagant: but it is partly my cousin's fault. I send you enclosed a pattern of my silk. I thought we were high in the fashion in Northamptonshire: but all my clothes are altering, that I may not *look frightful*, as the phrase is.

But shall I as easily get rid of the baronet, think you, as I hope I have of Mr. Fowler? He is come to town, and by his own invitation (in a card to Mr. Reeves) is to be here to-morrow afternoon. What signifies my getting out of the way? He will see me at another time; and I shall increase my own difficulties and his consequence, if he thinks I am afraid of him.

—o—

LETTER XVII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Wednesday Night.

Sir Hargrave came before six o'clock. He was richly dressed. He asked for my cousin Reeves. I was in my closet, writing. He was not likely to be the better received for the character Sir John Allestree gave of him.

He excused himself for coming so early, on the score of

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his impatience, and that he might have a little discourse with them, if I should be engaged before tea-time.

Was I within?—I was.—Thank heaven!—I was very good.

So he seemed to imagine that I was at home, in compliment to him.

Shall I give you, from my cousins, an account of the conversation before I went down? You know Mrs. Reeves is a nice observer.

He had had, he told my cousins, a most uneasy time of it, ever since he saw me. The devil fetch him, if he had had one hour's rest. He never saw a woman before whom he could love as he loved me. By his soul he had no view, but what was strictly honourable.

He sometimes sat down, sometimes walked about the room, strutting, and now and then adjusting something in his dress that nobody else saw wanted it. He gloried in the happy prospects before him: not but he knew I had a little *army* of admirers: but as none of them had met with encouragement from me, he hoped there was room for him to flatter himself that *he* might be the happy man.

I told you, Mr. Reeves, said he, that I will give you *carte blanche* as to settlements. What I do for so prudent a woman, will be doing for myself. I am not used, Mr. Reeves, to boast of my *fortune* [then, it seems, he went up to the glass, as if his *person* could not fail of being an *additional* recommendation]; but I will lay before you, or before any of Miss Byron's friends (Mr. Deane, if she pleases—), my rent-rolls. There never was a better conditioned estate. She shall live in town, or in the country, as she thinks fit; and in the latter, at which of my seats she pleases. I know I shall have no will but hers. I doubt not *your* friendship, Mr. Reeves; I hope for *yours*, madam. I shall have great pleasure in the alliance I have in view, with every individual of your family—As if he would satisfy them of his friendship, in the near relation, as the only matter that could bear a doubt.

Then he ran on upon the part I bore in the conversation at Lady Betty Williams's—By his soul, *only* the wisest, the wittiest, the most gracefully modest of women—*that was all*

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—Then, ha, ha, ha, hah, poor Walden! what a silly fellow! He had *caught a Tartar!* Ha, ha, ha, ha, hah—shaking his head and his gay sides: devil take him if he ever saw a *prig* so fairly taken in!—but I was a sly little rogue!—He saw that—By all that's good, I must myself *sing small* in *her* company!—I will never meet at hard edge with her—If I did—(and yet I have been thought to carry a good one)—I should be confoundedly gapped, *I can see that* [alluding to two knives, I suppose, gapping each other; and winking with one eye; and, as Mrs. Reeves described him, looking as wise as if he would make a compliment to his *penetration*, at the expense of his *understanding*]. But, continued he, as a woman is more a husband's than a man is a wife's [Have all the men this prerogative notion, Lucy? You know it is a better man's], I shall have a pride worth boasting of, if I can call such a jewel mine. Poor Walden! —Rot the fellow!—I warrant he would not have so knowing a wife for the world.—Ha, ha, ha, hah! He is right: it is certainly right for such narrow pedants to be afraid of learned women!—Methinks I see the fellow, conjuror-like, circumscribed in a narrow circle, putting into Greek what was better expressed in English; and forbidding every one's approach within the distance of his wand! Hah, hah, hah! —Let me die, if ever I saw a tragic-comical fellow better handled!—Then the faces he made—Saw you ever, Mr. Reeves, saw you ever in your life, such a parcel of disastrous faces made by one man.

Thus did Sir Hargrave, laughingly, run on: nor left he hardly anything for my cousin to say, or to do, but to laugh *with* him, and to smile *at* him.

On a message that tea was near ready, I went down. On my entering the room, he addressed me with an air of kindness and freedom. Charming Miss Byron! said he, I hope you are all benignity and compassion. You know not what I have suffered since I had the honour to see you last; bowing very low; then rearing himself up, holding back his head; and seemed the taller for having bowed.

Handsome fop! thought I to myself. I took my seat; and endeavoured to look easy and free, as usual; finding something to say to my cousins, and to him. He begged

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that tea might be postponed for half an hour; and that, before the servants were admitted, I would hear him relate the substance of the conversation that had passed between him and Mr. and Mrs. Reeves.

Had not Sir Hargrave intended me an honour, and had he not a very high opinion of the efficacy of eight thousand pounds a year in an address of this kind, I daresay he would have supposed a little more prefacing necessary: but, after he had told me, in a few words, how much he was attracted by my character before he saw me, he thought fit directly to refer himself to the declaration he had made at Lady Betty Williams's, both to Mr. Reeves and myself; and then talked of large settlements; boasted of his violent passion; and besought my favour with the utmost earnestness.

I would have played a little female trifling upon him, and affected to take his professions only for polite raillery, which men call *making love* to young women, who perhaps are frequently but too willing to take in earnest what the wretches mean but in jest: but the fervour with which he *renewed* (as he called it) his declaration, admitted not of fooling; and his *volubility* might have made questionable the sincerity of his declarations. As, therefore, I could not think of encouraging his addresses, I thought it best to answer him with openness and unreserve.

To seem to question the sincerity of such professions as you make, Sir Hargrave, might appear to you as if I wanted to be assured: but be pleased to know, that you are directing your discourse to one of the plainest-hearted women in England; and you may therefore expect from me nothing but the simplest truth. I thank you, sir, for your good opinion of me; but I cannot encourage your addresses.

You *cannot*, madam, *encourage my addresses!* And express yourself so seriously? Good heaven! [He stood silent a minute or two, looking upon me, and upon himself, as if he had said, foolish girl! knows she whom she refuses?] I have been assured, madam, recovering a little from his surprise, that your affections are not engaged. But surely it must be a mistake: some happy man——

Is it, interrupted I, a necessary consequence, that the

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woman who cannot receive the addresses of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, must be engaged?

Why, madam—as to that—I know not what to say—but a man of my fortune, and, I hope, not *absolutely* disagreeable either in person or temper; of *some* rank in life—He paused; then resuming—What, madam, if you are as much in earnest as you seem, can be your objection? Be so good as to name it, that I may know, whether I cannot be so happy as to get over it.

We do not, we *cannot*, all like the same person. Women, I have heard say, are very capricious. Perhaps I am so. But there is *something* (we cannot always say what) that attracts or disgusts us.

Disgusts! madam—*Disgusts!* Miss Byron.

I spoke in general, sir: I daresay, nineteen women out of twenty would think themselves favoured in the addresses of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen.

But *you*, madam, are the twentieth that I must love: and be so good as to let me know——

Pray, sir, ask me not a reason for a *peculiarity*. Do you not yourself shew a peculiarity in making me the twentieth?

Your merit, madam——

It would be vanity in me, sir, interrupted I, to allow a force to that plea. You, sir, may have more merit than perhaps the man I may happen to approve of better; but—*shall* I say? (pardon me, sir), you do not—you do not, hesitated I—hit my fancy—Pardon me, sir.

If pardon depends upon *my* breath, let me die if I *do!*—*Not hit your fancy*, madam! [And then he looked upon himself all around]—*Not hit your fancy*, madam!

I told you, sir, that you must not expect anything from me but the simplest truth. You do me an honour in your good opinion; and if my own heart were not, in this case, a very determined one, I would answer you with more politeness. But, sir, on such an occasion as this, I think it would not be honourable, it would not be just, to keep a man in an hour's suspense, when I am in none myself.

And are you then (angrily) so determined, Miss Byron?

I am, sir.

Confound me!—And yet I am enough confounded!—But

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I will not take an answer so contrary to my hopes. Tell me, madam, by the sincerity which you boast; are you not engaged in your affections? Is there not some one happy man, whom you prefer to all men?

I am a free person, Sir Hargrave. It is no impeachment of sincerity, if a free person answers not every question that may be put to her, by those to whom she is not accountable.

Very true, madam. But as it is no impeachment of your freedom to answer this question either negatively or affirmatively, and as you glory in your frankness, let me beseech you to answer it; are you, madam, or are you not, disengaged in your affections?

Excuse me, Sir Hargrave; I don't think you are entitled to an answer to this question. Nor, perhaps, would you be determined by the answer I should make to it, whether negative or affirmative.

Give me leave to say, madam, that I have some little knowledge of Mr. Fenwick and Mr. Greville, and of their addresses. They have both owned, that no hopes have you given them; yet declare that they *will* hope. Have you, madam, been as explicit to them, as you are to me?

I have, sir.

Then *they* are not the men I have to fear—Mr. Orme, madam——

Is a good man, sir.

Ah! madam!—But why then will you not say that you are engaged?

If I own I *am;* perhaps it will not avail me: it will still much less, if I say I am *not.*

Avail you! dear Miss Byron! I have pride, madam. If I had not, I should not aspire to *your* favour: but give me leave to say [and he reddened with anger], that my fortune, my descent, and my ardent affection for you, considered, it may not *dis*avail you. Your relations will at least think so, if I may have the honour of your consent for applying to them.

May your fortune, Sir Hargrave, be a blessing to you! It *will,* in proportion as you do good with it. But were it twice as much, that *alone* would have no charms for me. My duties would be increased with my power. *My* fortune is a humble one: but were it less, it would satisfy my

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ambition while I am single; and if I marry, I shall not desire to live beyond the estate of the man I choose.

Upon my soul, madam, you *must* be mine. Every word you speak adds a rivet to my chains.

Then, sir, let us say no more upon this subject.

He then laid a title to my gratitude from the passion he avowed for me.

That is a very poor plea, sir, said I, as you yourself would think, I believe, were one of our sex, whom you could not like, to claim a return of love from you upon it.

You are too refined, surely, madam.

Refined! what meant the man by the word in this place?

I believe, sir, we differ very widely in *many* of our sentiments.

We will not differ in *one*, madam, when I know yours; such is the opinion I have of your prudence, that I will adopt them, and make them my own.

This may be *said*, sir; but there is hardly a man in the world that, saying it, would keep his word: nor a woman, who ought to *expect* he should.

But you will allow of my visits to your cousins, madam?

Not on my account, sir.

You will not withdraw if I come? You will not refuse seeing me?

As you will be no visitor of mine, I must be allowed to act accordingly. Had I the least thought of encouraging your addresses, I would deal with you as openly as is consistent with my notions of modesty and decorum.

Perhaps, madam, from my gay behaviour at Lady Betty Williams's, you think me too airy a man. You have doubts of my sincerity: you question my honour.

That, sir, would be to injure myself.

Your *objections*, then, dear madam? Give me, I beseech you, some one material objection.

Why, sir, should you urge me thus?—When I have no *doubt*, it is unnecessary to look into my own mind for the particular reasons that move me to disapprove of the addresses of a gentleman whose profession of regard for me, notwithstanding, entitles him to civility and acknowledgment.

By my soul, madam, this is very comical:

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I do not like thee, Dr. *Fell;*
The reason why, I cannot tell—
But I don't like thee, Dr. *Fell.*

Such, madam, seem to me to be your reasons.

You are very pleasant, sir. But let me say, that if you are in earnest in your professions, you could not have quoted anything more against you than these humorous lines; since a dislike of such a nature as is implied by them, must be a dislike arising from something resembling a natural aversion; whether just or not, is little to the purpose.

I was not aware of that, replied he: but I hope yours to me is not such a one.

Excuse me, cousin, said I, turning to Mrs. Reeves: but I believe I have talked away the tea-time.

I think not of tea, said she.

Hang tea, said Mr. Reeves.

The devil fly away with the tea-kettle, said Sir Hargrave; let it not have entrance here, till I have said what I have further to say. And let me tell you, Miss Byron, that though you may not have a dying lover, you shall have a resolute one: for I will not cease pursuing you till you are mine, or till you are the wife of some other man.

He spoke this fiercely, and even rudely. I was disgusted as much at his manner as with his words.

I cannot, replied I, but congratulate myself on *one* felicity, since I have been in your company, sir; and that is, that in this whole conversation (and I think it much too long) I have not one thing to reproach myself with, or to be sorry for.

Your servant, madam, bowing:—but I am of the *contrary* opinion. By heaven, madam [with anger, and an air of insolence], I think you have pride, madam——

Pride, sir!

Cruelty,——

Cruelty, sir!

Ingratitude, madam.

I thought it was staying to be insulted. All that Sir John Allestree had said of him came into my head.

Hold, sir (for he seemed to be going on): *Pride, cruelty, ingratitude*, are crimes black enough. If you think I am

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guilty of them, excuse me that I retire for the benefit of recollection.—And, making a low courtesy, I withdrew in haste. He besought me to return; and followed me to the stairs' foot.

He shewed *his* pride, and his ill-nature too, before my cousins, when I was gone. He bit his lip: he walked about the room; then sitting down, he lamented, defended, and accused, and re-defended himself; and yet besought their interest with me.

He was greatly disturbed, he owned, that with *such* honourable *intentions*, with so much POWER to make me happy, and *such* a WILL to do so, he should be refused; and this without my assigning one reason for it.

And my cousins (to whom he again referred on that head) answering him, that they believed me disengaged in my affections; D—— him, he said, if he could account then for my behaviour to him.

He, however, threatened Mr. Orme: who (if *any*), he said, was the man I favoured. I had acknowledged, that neither Greville nor Fenwick were. My proud repulse had stung him, he owned. He begged, that they would send for me down in their names.

They liked not the humour he seemed to be in well enough to comply with his request; and sent up in his own name.

But I returned my compliments: I was busy in writing [and so I was—to you, my Lucy]; I hoped Sir Hargrave and my cousins would excuse me. I put *them* in to soften my refusal.

This still more displeased him. He besought *their* pardon; but he would haunt me like a ghost. In spite of man and devil I should be his, he had the presumption to repeat: and went away with a flaming face.

Don't you think, my dear, that my cousin Reeves was a little too mild in his own house; as I am under his guardianship? But perhaps he was the more patient for that very reason; and he *is* one of the best-natured men in England. And then £8000 a year?—Yet why should a man of my cousin's independent fortune—But grandeur will have its charms!

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Thus did Sir Hargrave confirm all that Sir John Allestree had said of his bad qualities: and I think I am more afraid of him than ever I was of any man before. I remember, that *mischievous* is one of the bad qualtities Sir John attributed to him: and *revengeful* another. Should I ever see him again on the same errand, I will be more explicit as to my being absolutely disengaged in my affections, if I can be so without giving him hope, lest he should do private mischief to some one on my account. Upon my word, I would not, of all the men I have ever seen, be the wife of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen.

And so much for this first visit of his. I wish his pride may be enough piqued to make it the last.

But could you have thought he would have shown himself so soon?—Yet he had paraded so much, before I went down, to my cousins, and so little expected a direct and determined repulse, that a man of his self-consequence might, perhaps, be allowed to be the more easily piqued by it.

Lady Betty has sent us notice, that on Thursday next there will be a ball at the Opera-house in the Haymarket. My cousins are to choose what they will be; but she insists, that my dress shall be left to her. I am not to know what it is to be, till the day before, or the very day. If I like it not, she will not put me to any expense about it.

You will easily imagine, upon such an alternative, I shall approve of it, be it what it will. I have only requested, that I may not be so remarkably dressed, as to attract the eyes of the company: if I am, I shall not behave with any tolerable presence of mind.

—o—

LETTER XVIII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Friday, February 10.

One of Mr. Greville's servants has just been here, with his master's compliments. So the wretch is come to town. I believe I shall soon be able to oblige him: he wishes, you know, to provoke me to say I *hate* him.

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Surely I draw inconveniences upon myself by being so willing to pay civility for esteem. Yet it is in my nature to do so, and I cannot help it without committing a kind of violence on my temper. There is no merit, therefore, in my behaviour on such occasions. Very pretty self-deception! —I study my own ease, and (before I consider) am ready to call myself patient, and good-humoured, and civil, and to attribute to myself I know not how many kind and complaisant things; when I ought, in modesty, to distinguish between the *virtue* and the *necessity*.

I never was uncivil, as I call it, but to one young gentleman; a man of quality (you know who I mean); and that was, because he wanted me to keep secret his addresses to me, for family considerations. The young woman who engages to keep her lover's secrets in this particular, is often brought into a plot against herself, and oftener still against those to whom she owes unreserved honour and duty: and is not such a conduct also an indirect confession, that you know you are engaging in something wrong and unworthy?

Mr. Greville's arrival vexes me. I suppose it will not be long before Mr. Fenwick comes too. I have a good mind to try to like the modest Mr. Orme the better, in spite.

—o—

Saturday Morning, February 11.

I SHALL have nothing to trouble you with, I think, but scenes of courtship. Sir Rowland, Sir Hargrave, and Mr. Greville, all met just now at our breakfast time.

Sir Rowland came first; a little before breakfast was ready. After inquiries of Mr. Reeves, whether I held in the same mind, or not; he desired to have the favour of one quarter of an hour's conversation with me alone.

Methinks I have a value for this honest knight. Honesty, my Lucy, is good sense, politeness, amiableness, all in one. An honest man must appear in every light with such advantages, as will make even *singularity* agreeable. I went down directly.

He met me; and taking my not-withdrawn hand, and peering in my face, Mercy! said he; the same kind aspect! The same sweet and obliging countenance! How can this be? But you *must* be gracious! You *will*. Say you will.

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You must not urge me, Sir Rowland. You will give me pain if you lay me under a necessity to repeat——

Repeat what? Don't say a refusal. Dear madam, don't say a refusal! Will you not save a life? Why, madam, my poor boy is absolutely and *bona fide* broken-hearted. I would have had him come with me: but, no, he could not bear to tease the beloved of his soul! Why, there's an instance of love now! Not for all his hopes, not for his life's sake, could he bear to tease you! None of your fluttering Jack-a-dandys, now, would have said this! And let not such succeed, where modest merit fails!—Mercy! you are struck with my plea! Don't, don't, God bless you, now, don't harden your heart on my observation. I was resolved to set out in a day or two: but I will stay in town, were it a month, to see my boy made happy. And, let me tell you, I would not wish him to be happy unless he could make you so—Come, come——

I was a little affected. I was silent.

Come, come, be gracious; be merciful. Dear lady, be as good as you look to be. One word of comfort for my poor boy. I could kneel to you for one word of comfort—Nay, I *will* kneel; taking hold of my other hand, as he still held one; and down on his knees dropt the honest knight.

I was surprised. I knew not what to say, what to do. I had not the courage to attempt to lift him up. Yet to see a man of his years, and who had given himself a claim to my esteem, kneel; and, with glistening eyes, looking up to me for *mercy*, as he called it, on his *boy;* how was I affected!—But, at last, Rise, dear Sir Rowland, rise, said I: you call out for mercy to me; yet have none upon me. O how you distress me!

I would have withdrawn my hands; but he held them fast. I stamped in tender passion [I am *sure* it was in *tender* passion], now with one foot, now with the other; dear Sir Rowland, rise; I cannot bear this. I beseech you rise [and down I dropt involuntarily on one knee]. What can I say? Rise, dear sir; on *my* knee I beg of you kneel not to me: indeed, sir, you greatly distress me! Pray let go my hands.

Tears ran down his cheeks.—And *do* I distress you,

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madam? And *do* you vouchsafe to kneel to me?—I will *not* distress you: for the *world* I will not distress you.

He arose, and let go my hands. I arose too, abashed. He pulled out his handkerchief, and hastening from me to the window, wiped his eyes. Then turning to me, What a fool I am! What a mere child I make of myself! How can I blame my boy? Oh, madam! have you not one word of comfort to send by me to my boy? Say but you will see him. Give him leave to wait on you: yet, poor soul! (wiping his eyes again) he would not be able to say a word in his own behalf.—Bid me bring him to you: bid us come together.

And so I could, and so I would, Sir Rowland, if no other expectations were to be formed than those of civility. But I will go farther, to shew my regard for you, sir: let me be happy in your friendship, and good opinion: let me look upon you as my father: let me look upon Mr. Fowler as my brother: I am not so happy, as to have either father or brother: and let Mr. Fowler own me as his sister; and every visit you make me, you will both, in these characters, be dearer to me than before.—But, O my father! (already will I call you father!) urge not your daughter to an impossibility!

Mercy! mercy! What will become of me? What will become of my boy, rather?

He turned from me with his handkerchief at his eyes again, and even sobbed. Where are all my purposes? Irresistible lady!—But must I give up my hopes? Must my boy be told—And yet, do you call me *father?* and do you plead for my indulgence as if you were my *daughter?*

Indeed I do; indeed I must. I have told Mr. Fowler, with so much regard for him, as an honest, as a worthy man——

Why, that's the weapon that wounds him, that cuts him to the heart! Your gentleness, your openness—And *are* you determined? *Can* there be no hope?

Mr. Fowler is my *brother,* sir; and *you* are my *father.*—Accept me in those characters.

Accept you! Mercy! Accept you!—Forgive me, madam (catching my hand, and pressing it with his lips), you do me

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honour in the appellation: but if your mind should change, on consideration, and from motives of pity——

Indeed, indeed, Sir Rowland, it cannot change.

Why then, I, as well as my nephew, must acquiesce with your pleasure. But, madam, you don't know what a worthy creature he is. I will not, however, tease you.—But how, but how, shall I see Mr. Reeves? I am ashamed to see him with this baby in my face.

And I, Sir Rowland, must retire before I can appear. Excuse me, sir (withdrawing): but I hope you will breakfast with us.

I will drink tea with you, madam, if I can make myself fit to be seen, were it but to claim you for my *daughter:* but yet had much rather you would be a farther remove in relation! would to God you would let it be *niece!*——

I courtesied, as a daughter might do, parting with her real father; and withdrew.

And now, my Lucy, will you not be convinced that one of the greatest pains (the loss of dear friends excepted) that a grateful mind can know, is to be too much beloved by a worthy heart, and not to be able to return his love?

My sheet is ended. With a new one I will begin another letter.—Yet a few words in the margin—I tell you not, my dear, of the public entertainments to which Lady Betty is continually contriving to draw me out. She intends by it to be very obliging, and *is* so: but my present reluctance to go so very often, must not be overcome, as it possibly would be too easily done, were I to give way to the temptation. If it be, your Harriet may turn gadfly, and never be easy but when she is forming parties, or giving way to them, that may make the home, that hitherto has been the chief scene of her pleasures, undelightful to her. Bad habits are sooner acquired than shaken off, as my grandmamma has often told us.

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LETTER XIX.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

WHO would have thought that a man of Sir Rowland's time of life, and a woman so young as I, could have so much discomposed each other? I obeyed the summons to breakfast, and entered the room at one door, as he came in at the other. In vain had I made use of the short retirement to conceal my emotion from my cousins. They also saw Sir Rowland's by his eyes, and looked at him, at me, and at each other.

Mercy! said Sir Rowland, in an accent that seemed between crying and laughing, You, you, you, madam, are a surprising lady! I, I, I, never was so affected in my life. And he drew the back of his hand cross first over one eye, then the other.

Oh, Sir Rowland! said I, you are a good man. How affecting are the visible emotions of a manly heart!

My cousins still looked as if surprised; but said nothing.

Oh, my cousins! said I, I have found a father in Sir Rowland; and I acknowledge a brother in Mr. Fowler.

Best of women! Most excellent of creatures! And do you *own* me? He snatched my hand, and kissed it. What pride do you give me in this open acknowledgment! If it must not be *niece*, why then I will endeavour to rejoice in my *daughter*, I think. But yet, my boy, my poor boy—But you are all goodness: and with him I say, I must not tease you.

What you have been saying to each other alone, said Mrs. Reeves, I cannot tell: but I long to know.

Why, madam, I will tell you—if I know how.—You must know, that I, that I, came as an ambassador extraordinary from my sorrowful boy: yet not desired; nor sent: I came of my own accord, in hopes of getting one word of comfort, and to bring matters on, before I set out for Caermarthen.

The servant coming in, and a loud rap, rap, rap, on the footman's musical instrument, the knocker of the door, put

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a stop to Sir Rowland's narrative. In apprehension of company, I breathed on my hand, and put it to either eye; and Sir Rowland hemmed twice or thrice, and rubbed his, the better to conceal their redness, though it made them redder than before. He got up, looked at the glass: would have sung. *Toll, doll*—Hem, said he; as if the muscles of his face were in the power of his voice. Mercy! all the infant still in my eye—*Toll, doll*—Hem! I would sing it away, if I could.

Sir Hargrave entered bowing, scraping to me, and with an air not ungraceful.

Servant, sir, said the knight (to Sir Hargrave's silent salute to him), bowing, and looking at the baronet's genteel morning dress, and then at his own—Who the deuse is *he?* whispering to Mr. Reeves: who then presented each to the other by name.

The baronet approached me: I have, madam, a thousand pardons to ask——

Not one, sir——

Indeed I have—and most heartily do I beg——

You are forgiven, sir——

But I will not be so *easily* forgiven.

Mercy! whispered the knight to Mr. Reeves, I don't like'n. Ah! my poor boy: no wonder at this rate:——

You have not much to fear, Sir Rowland (rewhispered my cousin), on this gentleman's account.

Thank you, thank you—And yet 'tis a fine figure of a man! whispered again Sir Rowland. Nay, if she can withstand *him*—But a word to the wise, Mr. Reeves!—Hem!—I am a little easier than I was.

He turned to my cousin with such an air, as if, from contrasted pleasure and pain, he would again have sung *Toll, doll.*

The servant came in with the breakfast: and we had no sooner sat down, as before, than we were alarmed by another modern rapping. Mr. Reeves was called out, and returned, introducing Mr. Greville.

Who the deuse is *he?* whispered to me Sir Rowland (as he sat next me), before Mr. Reeves could name him.

Mr. Greville profoundly bowed to me. I asked after the health of all our friends in Northamptonshire.

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Have you seen Fenwick, madam?

No, sir.

A dog! I thought he had played me a trick. I missed him for three days—But (in a low voice) if you have not seen him, I have stole a march upon *him!*—Well, I had rather ask *his* pardon than he should ask *mine.* I rejoice to see you well, madam! (raising his voice)—But what!—looking at my eyes.

Colds are very rife in London, sir——

I am glad it is no worse; for your grandmamma, and all friends in the country, are well.

I have found a papa, Mr. Greville (referring to Sir Rowland), since I came to town. This good gentleman gives me leave to call him father.

No *son!*—I hope, Sir Rowland, you have no son, said Mr. Greville: the relation comes not about that way, I hope; and laughed, as he used to do, at his own smartness.

The very question I was going to put, by my soul, said the baronet.

No! said the knight: but I have a *nephew,* gentlemen—a very pretty young fellow! And I have this to say before you all (I am downright Dunstable), I had much rather call this lady *niece,* than *daughter.* And then the knight forced a laugh, and looked round upon us all.

Oh, Sir Rowland! replied I, I have uncles, more than one—I *am* a niece: but I have not had for many years till now the happiness of a father.

And do you own me, madam, before all this gay company? —The first time I beheld you, I remember I called you a perfect paragon. Why, madam, you are the most excellent of women!

We are so much convinced of this, Sir Rowland, said the baronet, that I don't know, but Miss Byron's choosing you for a *father,* instead of an *uncle,* may have saved two or three throats.

And then he laughed. His laugh was the more seasonable, as it softened the shockingness of his expression.

Mr. Greville and the baronet had been in company twice before in Northamptonshire at the races: but now and then looked upon each other with envious eyes; and once or twice

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were at cross purposes: but my particular notice of the knight made all pass lightly over.

Sir Rowland went first away. He claimed one word with his *daughter,* in the character of a *father.*

I withdrew with him to the further end of the room.

Not *one* word of comfort? not *one* word, madam?—to my boy; whispered he.

My compliments (speaking low) to my *brother,* sir. I wish him as well and as happy as I think he deserves to be.

Well but—Well but——

Only remember, Sir Rowland, that you act in character. I followed you hither, on the strength of your authority, as a *father;* I beg, sir, that you will preserve to me that character.

Why, God in heaven bless my daughter! if *only* daughter you can be. Too well do I understand you! I will see how my poor nephew will take it. If it *can* be no otherwise, I will prevail upon him, I think, to go down with me to Caermarthen for a few months.—But as to those two fine gentlemen, madam—It would grieve me ('tis a folly to deny it) to say I have seen the man that is to supplant my nephew.

I will act in character, Sir Rowland: as your *daughter,* you have a right to know my sentiments on this subject—You have not *yet* seen the man you seem to be afraid of.

You are all goodness, madam—my *daughter*—and I cannot bear it.

He spoke this loud enough to be heard; and Mr. Greville and the baronet both, with some emotion, rose, and turned about to us.

Once more, Sir Rowland, said I, my compliments to my *brother*—Adieu!

God in heaven bless you, madam! that's all—Gentlemen, your servant. Mrs. Reeves, your most obedient humble servant. Madam, to me, you will allow me, and my nephew too, one more visit, I hope, before I set out for Caermarthen.

I courtesied, and joined my cousins. Away went the knight, brushing the ground with his hat, at his going out. Mr. Reeves waited on him to the outward door.

'Bye, 'bye, to you, Mr. Reeves—with some emotion (as

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my cousin told me afterwards)—A wonderful creature! By mercy! a wonderful creature!—I go away with my heart full; yet am pleased; I know not why neither, that's the jest of it—'Bye, Mrs. Reeves, I can stay no longer.

An odd mortal! said the *man of the town*—But seems to know on which side his bread is buttered.

A whimsical old fellow! said the *man of the country*, But I rejoice that he has not a *son;* that's all.

A good many frothy things passed, not worth relating. I wanted them both to be gone. They seemed each to think it time; but looked as if neither cared to leave the other behind him.

At last Mr. Greville, who hinted to me, that he knew I loved not too long an intrusion, bowed, and, politely enough, took his leave. And then the baronet began, with apologizing for his behaviour at taking leave on his last visit.

Some gentlemen, I said, had one way, some another, of expressing themselves on particular occasions: he had thought fit to shew me what was his.

He seemed a little disconcerted. But quickly recovering himself, he could not indeed excuse himself, he said, for having then called me *cruel*—Cruel, he hoped he should not find me.—*Proud*—I knew not what pride was.—*Ungrateful*—I could not be guilty of ingratitude. He begged me to forgive his peremptoriness—He had hoped (as he had been assured that my affections were absolutely disengaged) that the proposals he had to make would have been acceptable: and so positive a refusal, without any one reason assigned, and on his first visit, had indeed hurt his pride (he owned, he said, that he had some pride), and made him forget that he was addressing himself to a woman who deserved and met with the veneration of every one who approached her. He next expressed himself with apprehensions on Mr. Greville's arrival in town. He spoke slightly of him. Mr. Greville, I doubt not, will speak as slightly of Sir Hargrave. And, if I believe them both, I fancy I shall not injure either.

Mr. Greville's arrival, I said, ought not to concern me. He was to do as he thought fit. I was only desirous to be allowed the same free agency that I was ready to allow others.

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That could not be, he said. Every man who saw me, must wish me to be his; and endeavour to obtain his wishes.

And then making vehement professions of love, he offered me large settlements; and to put it in my power to do all the good that he knew it was in my heart to do—and that I should prescribe to him in everything as to the place of residence, excursions, even to the going abroad to France, to Italy, and wherever I pleased.

To all which I answered as before; and when he insisted upon my reasons for refusing him, I frankly told him, though I owned it was with some reluctance, that I had not the opinion of his morals that I must have of those of the man to whom I gave my hand in marriage.

Of my *morals*, madam (starting; and his colour went and came)! My *morals*, madam!—I thought he looked with malice: but I was not intimidated: and yet my cousins looked at me with some little surprise for my plain-dealing, though not as blaming me.

Be not displeased, sir, with my freedom. You call upon me to make objections. I mean not to upbraid you; that is not *my* business; but, thus called upon, I must repeat—I stopt.

Proceed, madam, angrily.

Indeed, Sir Hargrave, you must pardon me on *this* occasion, if I repeat, that I have not that opinion of your morals——

Very well, madam——

That I must have of those of the man on whose worthiness I must build my hopes of *present* happiness, and to whose guidance entrust my *future*. This, sir, is a very material consideration with me, though I am not fond of talking upon it, except on *proper* occasions, and to *proper* persons: but, sir, let me add, that I am determined to live longer single. I think it too early to engage in a life of care: and, if I do not meet with a man to whom I can give my whole heart, I never will marry at all—[O how maliciously looked the man!]—You are angry, Sir Hargrave, added I; but you have no right to be so. You address me as one who is her own mistress. And though I would

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not be thought rude, I value myself on my openness of heart.

He arose from his seat. He walked about the room muttering, 'You have no opinion of my morals'—By heaven, madam!—But I will bear it all—Yet, 'No opinion of my 'morals!'—I cannot bear that——

He then clenched his fist, and held it up to his head; and snatching up his hat, bowing to the ground to us all, his face crimsoned over (as the time before), he withdrew.

Mr. Reeves attended him to the door—'Not like my 'morals!' said he—I have *enemies*, Mr. Reeves—'Not like 'my morals!'—Miss Byron treats politely everybody but me, sir. Her scorn may be repaid—Would to God I could say with scorn, Mr. Reeves.—Adieu. Excuse my warmth. —Adieu.

And into his chariot he stept, pulling up the glasses with violence; and, as Mr. Reeves told us, rearing up his head to the top of it, as he sat swelling. And away it drove.

His menacing airs, and abrupt departure, terrified me. I did not recover myself in an hour.

A fine husband for your Harriet would this half madman make!—Oh, Mr. Fowler, Sir Rowland, Mr. Orme, what good men are you to Sir Hargrave! Should I have known half so much as I do of his ill qualities, had I not refused him? Drawn in by his professions of love, and by £8000 a year, I might have married him; and, when too late, found myself miserable, yoked with a tyrant and madman, for the remainder of a life begun with happy prospects, and glorying in every one's love.

—o—

LETTER XX.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Monday, February 13.

I HAVE received my uncle's long letter: and I thank him for the pains he hath taken with me. He is very good. But my grandmamma and my aunt are equally so; and, in the main, much kinder, in acquitting me of some charges

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which he is pleased to make upon his poor Harriet. But, either for caution or reproof, I hope to be the better for his letter.

James is set out for Northamptonshire: pray receive him kindly. He is honest: and Sally has given me a hint, as if a sweetheart is in his head: if so, his impatience to leave London may be accounted for. My grandmamma has observed, that young people of small or no fortunes should not be discouraged from marrying. Who that could be masters or mistresses, would be servants? The honest poor, as she has often said, are a very valuable part of the creation.

Mr. Reeves has seen several footmen, but none that he gave me the trouble of speaking to till just now; when a well-looking young man, about twenty-six years of age, offered himself, and whom I believe I shall like. Mrs. Reeves seems mightily taken with him. He is well-behaved, has a very sensible look, and seems to merit a better service.

Mr. Reeves has written for a character of him to the last master he lived with; Mr. Bagenhall, a young gentleman in the neighbourhood of Reading: of whom he speaks well in the main; but modestly objected to his hours, and free way of life. The young man came to town but yesterday, and is with a widow sister, who keeps an inn in Smithfield. I have a *mind* to like him, and this makes me more particular about him.

His name is William Wilson: he asks pretty high wages: but wages to a good servant are not to be stood upon. What signify forty or fifty shillings a year? An honest servant should be enabled to lay up something for age and infirmity. Hire him at once, Mrs. Reeves says. She will be answerable for his honesty, from his looks, and from his answers to the questions asked him.

Sir Hargrave has been here again. Mrs. Reeves, Miss Clements, and I, were in the back-room together. We had drank tea; and I excused myself to his message, as engaged.

He talked a good deal to Mr. Reeves: sometimes high, sometimes humble. He had not intended, he said, to have renewed his visits. My disdain had stung him to the heart:

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yet he could not keep away. He called himself names. He was determined I should he his; and swore to it. A man of his fortune to be refused, by a lady who had not (and whom he wished not to have) an answerable fortune, and no preferable liking to any other man [there Sir Hargrave was mistaken; for I like almost every man I know, better than him]; his person not contemptible [and then, my cousin says, he surveyed himself from head to foot at the glass]; was very, *very* unaccountable.

He asked if Mr. Greville came up with any hopes?

Mr. Reeves told him that I was offended at his coming, and he was sure he would not be the better for his journey.

He was glad of that, he said. There were two or three free things, proceeded he, said to me in conversation by Mr. Greville, which I knew not well what to make of: but they shall pass, if he has no more to boast of than I. I know Mr. Greville's blustering character; but I wish the carrying of Miss Byron were to depend upon the sword's point between us. I would not come into so paltry a compromise with him as Fenwick has done. But still the imputing want of *morals* to me, sticks with me. Surely I am a better man, in point of morals, than either Greville or Fenwick. What man on earth doth not take liberties with the sex? Hey, you know, Mr. Reeves! Women were made for us; and they like us not the worse for loving them. *Want of morals!*—and objected to me by a *lady!*—Very extraordinary by my soul!—Is it not better to sow one's wild oats before matrimony, than run riot afterwards?—What say you, Mr. Reeves?

Mr. Reeves was too patient with him. He is a mild man: yet wants not spirit, my cousin says, on occasion. He gave Sir Hargrave the hearing; who went away, swearing, that I should be his, in spite of man or devil.

—o—

Monday Night.

Mr. Greville came in the evening. He begged to be allowed but ten words with me in the next room. I desired to be excused. You know, sir, said I, that I never complied with a request of this nature, at Selby House. He

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looked hard at my cousins: and first one, then the other, went out. He then was solicitous to know what were Sir Hargrave's expectations from me. He expressed himself uneasy upon his account. He hoped such a man as *that* would not be encouraged. Yet his ample fortune—Woman! woman!—But he was neither a wiser nor a better man than himself: and he hoped Miss Byron would not give a preference to fortune *merely*, against a man who *had* been her admirer for so long a time; and who wanted neither will nor power to make her happy.

It was very irksome to me, I answered, to be obliged so often to repeat the same things to him. I would not be thought affronting to anybody, especially to a neighbour with whom my friends were upon good terms: but I did not think myself answerable to him, or to any one out of my own family, for my visitors; or for whom my cousins Reeves thought fit to receive as theirs.

Would I give him an assurance, that Sir Hargrave should have no encouragement?

No, sir, I will not. Would not that be to give you indirectly a kind of control over me? Would not that be to encourage a hope, that I never *will* encourage?

I love not my own soul, madam, as I love you: I must, and will persevere. If I thought Sir Hargrave had the least hope, by the great God of heaven! I would pronounce his days numbered.

I am but too well acquainted with your rashness, Mr. Greville. What formerly passed between you and another gentleman, gave me pain enough. In such an enterprise your own days might be numbered, as well as another's. But I enter not into this subject—*Henceforth* be so good as not to impute incivility to me, if I deny myself to your visits.

I would have withdrawn——

Dear Miss Byron (stepping between me and the door), leave me not in anger. If matters *must* stand as they were, I hope you *can*, I hope you *will*, assure me, that this Sir Fopling——

What right have you, sir, to any assurance of this nature from me?

None, madam—but from your goodness.—Dear Miss

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Byron, *condescend* to say, that this Sir Hargrave shall not make any impression on your heart. For *his sake* say it, if not for *mine*. I know you care not what becomes of *me*; yet let not this milk-faced, and tiger-hearted fop (for that is his character), obtain favour from you. Let your choice, if it must fall on another man, and not on me, fall on one to whose superior merit, and to whose good fortune, I can subscribe. For your own fame's sake, let a man of unquestionable honour be the happy man; and vouchsafe as to a neighbour, and as to a well-wishing friend only (I ask it not in the light of a lover), to tell me that Sir Hargrave Pollexfen shall not be the man.

What, Mr. Greville, let me ask you, is your business in town?

My *chief* business, madam, you may guess at. I had a hint of this man's intentions given me; and that he has the vanity to think he shall succeed. But if I can be assured that you will not be prevailed upon in favour of a man, whose fortune is so ample——

You will then return to Northamptonshire?

Why, madam, I can't but say, that now I am in town, and that I have bespoke a new equipage, and so forth.

Nay, sir, it is nothing to me, what you will or will not do: only be pleased to remember, that as in Northamptonshire your visits were to my uncle Selby, not to me, they will be here in London, to my cousins Reeves only.

Too well do I know that you can be cruel if you will; but is it your *pleasure* that I return to the country?

My *pleasure*, sir!—Mr. Greville is surely to do as he pleases. I only wish to be allowed the same liberty.

You are so very delicate, Miss Byron! So very much afraid of giving the least advantage——

And men are so ready to take advantage—But yet, Mr Greville, not so delicate as just. I do assure you, that if I were not determined——

Determined!—Yes, yes! You can be *steady*, as Mr. Selby calls it! I never knew so determined a woman in my life. I own, it was a little inconvenient for me to come to town just now: and say, that you would *wish* me to leave London; and that neither *this Sir Hargrave*, nor

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that other man, your *new father's* nephew (What do you call him? Fore-gad, madam, I am afraid of these new relations), shall make any impression on your heart; and that you will not withdraw when I come here; and I will set out next week; and write this very night to let Fenwick know how matters stand, and that I am coming down but little the better for my journey: and this may save you seeing your other tormentor, as your cousin Lucy says you once called that poor devil, and the still poorer devil before you.

You are so rash a man, Mr. Greville (and *other* men may be as rash as you), that I cannot say but it would save me some pain——

Oh, take care, take care, Miss Byron, that you express yourself so cautiously, as to give no advantage to a poor dog, who would be glad to take a journey to the farthest part of the globe to oblige you. But what say you about this Sir Hargrave, and about your *new brother?*—Let me tell you, madam, I am so much afraid of those whining, insinuating, creeping dogs, attacking you on the side of your compassion, and be d—n'd to them (Orme for that), that I *must* have a declaration. And now, madam, can't you give it with your usual caution? Can't you give it, as I put it, as to a *neighbour*, as to a *well-wisher*, and so forth, not as a lover.

Well then, Mr. Greville, as a *neighbour*, as a *well-wisher;* and since you own it was inconvenient to your affairs to come up—I advise you to go down again.

The devil! how have you hit it! Your delicacy ought to thank *me* for the loop-hole. The condition, madam; the condition, if I take your *neighbourly* advice.

Why, Mr. Greville, I do most sincerely declare to you, as to a neighbour and well-wisher, that I never *yet* have seen the man to whom I can think of giving my hand.

Yes, you have! By heaven you have (snatching my hand): you shall give it to *me!*—And the strange wretch pressed it so hard to his mouth, that he made prints upon it with his teeth.

Oh! cried I, withdrawing my hand, surprised, and my face, as I could feel, all in a glow.

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And *oh!* said he, mimicking, and (snatching my other hand, as I would have run from him, and patting it), speaking through his closed teeth, you may be glad you have a hand left. By my soul, I could eat you.

This was your disconsolate, fallen-spirited, Greville, Lucy!

I rushed into the company in the next room. He followed me with an air altogether unconcerned, and begged to look at my hand; whispering to Mrs. Reeves; by Jupiter, said he, I had like to have eaten up your lovely cousin. I was beginning with her hand.

I was more offended with this instance of his assurance and unconcern, than with the freedom itself; because that had the appearance of his usual gaiety with it. I thought it best, however, not to be too serious upon it. But next time he gets me by myself, he shall eat up both my hands.

At taking leave, he hoped his mad flight had not discomposed me. See, Miss Byron, said he, what you get by making an honest fellow desperate!—But you insist upon my leaving the town? As a *neighbour*, as a *well-wisher*, you *advise* it, madam? Come, come, don't be afraid of speaking after me, when I endeavour to hit your cue.

I do *advise* you——

Conditions, remember!—You know what you have declared—angel of a woman! said he again through his shut teeth.

I left him; and went up stairs; glad I had got rid of him.

He has since seen Mr. Reeves, and told him, he will make me one visit more before he leaves London: and pray tell her, said he, that I have actually written to my *brother-tormentor* Fenwick, that I am returning to Northamptonshire.

I told you, that Miss Clements was with me when Sir Hargrave came last. I like her, every time I see her, better than before. She has a fine understanding; and if languages, according to my grandfather's observation, need not be deemed an *indispensable* part of learning, she may be looked upon as learned.

She has engaged me to breakfast with her to-morrow morning; when she is to shew me her books, needle-works, and other curiosities. Shall I not fancy myself in my

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Lucy's closet! How continually, amid all this fluttering scene, do I think of my dear friends in Northamptonshire! Express for me love, duty, gratitude, every sentiment that fills the heart of your HARRIET BYRON.

—o—

LETTER XXI.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Tuesday Morning, Feb. 14.

I HAVE passed an agreeable two hours with Miss Clements, and am just returned. She is extremely ingenious, and perfectly unaffected. I am told, that she writes finely; and is a Madame de Sevigné to her correspondents. I hope to be one of them. But she has not, I find, suffered her pen to run away with her needle; nor her reading to interfere with that housewifery which the best judges hold so indispensable in the character of a good woman.

I revere her for this, as her example may be produced as one, in answer to such as object (I am afraid sometimes too justly, but I hope too generally) against learning in women. Methinks, however, I would not have learning the *principal* distinction of the woman I love. And yet, where talents are *given*, should we wish them to be either uncultivated or unacknowledged? Surely, Lucy, we may pronounce, that where no duty is neglected for the acquirement; where modesty, delicacy, and a teachable spirit, are preserved, as characteristics of the sex, it need not be thought a disgrace to be supposed to know something.

Miss Clements is happy, as well as your Harriet, in an aunt, that loves her. She has a mother living, who is too great a self-lover, to regard anybody else as she ought. She lives as far off as York, and was so unnatural a parent to this good child, that her aunt was not easy till she got her from her. Mrs. Wimburn looks upon her as her daughter, and intends to leave her all she is worth.

The old lady was not very well: but she obliged us with her agreeable company for half an hour.

Miss Clements and I agreed to fall in occasionally upon each other without ceremony.

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I should have told you, that the last master of the young man, William Wilson, having given him in writing a very good character, I have entertained him; and his first service was attending on me to Miss Clements.

Lady Betty called here in my absence. She is, it seems, very full of the dresses, and mine in particular: but I must know nothing about it, as yet. We are to go to her house to dress, and to proceed from thence in chairs. She is to take care of everything. You shall know, my Lucy, what figure I am to make, when I know it myself.

The baronet also called at my cousins while I was out. He saw only Mr. Reeves. He staid about a quarter of an hour. He was very moody and sullen, it seems. Quite another man, Mr. Reeves said, than he had ever seen him before. Not one laugh; not one smile. All that fell from his lips was yes or no; or by way of invective against the sex. It was, 'the devil of a sex.' It was a cursed thing, he said, that a man could neither be happy with them, nor without them. *Devil's baits*, was another of his compliments to us. He hardly mentioned my name.

Mr. Reeves at last began to rally him upon his moodiness; and plainly saw, that to avoid shewing more of his petulance (when he had not a right to shew any) to a man of Mr. Reeves's consideration, and in his own house, he went away the sooner. His footman and coachman, he believed, had an ill time of it; for, without reason, he cursed them, swore at them, and threatened them.

What does the man haunt us for?—Why brings he such odious humours to Mr. Reeves?

But no more of such a man, nor of anything else, till my next. Only, Adieu, my LUCY.

LETTER XXII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Wednesday Morning, Feb. 15.

MR. GREVILLE took leave of us yesterday evening, in order to set out this morning, on his return home. He

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would fain have engaged me for half an hour alone; but I would not oblige him.

He left London, he said, with some regret, because of the *fluttering* Sir Hargrave, and the *creeping* Mr. Fowler: but depended upon my declaration, that I had not, in *either of them*, seen the man I could encourage. *Either* of them were the words he chose to use; for, in compliment to himself, he would not repeat my very words, that I had not yet seen *any man* to whom I could give my hand. Shall I give you a few particulars of what passed between me and this very whimsical man?—I will.

He had been inquiring, he said, into the character and pretensions of my *brother* Fowler; and intended, if he could bring Orme and him together, to make a match between them, who should out-whine the other.

Heroes, I told him, ought not to make a jest of those, who, on comparison, gave them all their advantages.

He bowed, and called himself my servant—and with an affected laugh, yet, madam, yet madam, I am not afraid of these *piping* men: though you have compassion for such *watery-headed* fellows, yet you have *only* compassion.

Respectful love, Mr. Greville, is not always the indication either of a weak head, or a faint heart; any more than the contrary is of a true spirit.

Perhaps so, madam. But yet I am not afraid of these two men.

You have no *reason* to be afraid of anybody on my account, Mr. Greville.

I hope not.

You will find, sir, at last, that you had better take my meaning. It is obvious enough.

But I have no mind to hang, drown, or pistol myself.

Mr. Greville still!—Yet it would be well if there were not many Mr. Grevilles.

I take your meaning, madam. You have explained it heretofore. It is, that I am a libertine; that we have all one dialect; and that I can say nothing new, or that is worthy of your attention—There, madam: may I not be always sure of your meaning, when I construe it against myself?

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I wish, sir, that my *neighbour* would give me leave to behave to him as my *neighbour*——

And could you, madam, supposing *love* out of the question (which it cannot be), could you, in *that* case, regard me as your neighbour?

Why not, sir?

Because I believe you hate me; and I only want you to tell me that you do.

I hope, sir, I shall never have reason given me to hate any man.

But if you hate any one man more than another, is it not me? [I was silent.] Strange, Mrs. Reeves (turning to her), that Miss Byron is not susceptible either of love or hatred!

She is too good to *hate* anybody; and as for *love*, her time seems not to be yet come.

When it is come, it will come with a vengeance, I hope.

Uncharitable man, said I, smiling.

Don't smile: I can't *bear* to see you smile: Why don't you be angry at me?—Angel of a creature! (with his teeth again closed), don't smile: I cannot bear your bewitching smiles!

The man is out of his right mind, Mrs. Reeves. I don't choose to stay in his company.

I would have withdrawn. He besought me to stay; and stood between me and the door. I was angry.

He whimsically stamped—Obliging creature!—I besought you to forbear smiling—You frown—Do, God for ever bless you, my dear Miss Byron, let me be favoured with another frown!

Strange man! and bold as strange!—I would have pressed to the door; but he set his back against it.

These are the airs, you know, Lucy, for which I used to shun him.

Pish! said I, vexed to be hindered from withdrawing.

Another, another such a frown (said the confident man), and I am happy!—The last has left no trace upon your features: it vanished before I could well behold it. Another frown, I beseech you; another pish——

I was really angry.—Bear witness [looking around him], bear witness! Once did Miss Byron endeavour to frown: and, to oblige whom?—Her Greville!

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Mr. Greville, you had better—I stopt. I was vexed. I knew not what I was going to say.

How *better*, madam? Am I not desperate?—But *had* I better? Say, repeat that again—*had* I better—better what?

The man's mad. Oh, my cousins! let me never again be called to this man.

Mad!—And so I am. Mad for *you*. I care not who knows it. Why don't you hate me? He snatched at my hand; but I started back. You own that you never yet loved the man who loved you. Such is your gratitude!—Say you hate me.

I was silent, and turned from him peevishly.

Why *then* (as if I had said I did not *hate* him), say you love me; and I will look down with contempt upon the greatest prince on earth.

We should have had more of this—but the rap of consequence gave notice of the visit of a person of consideration. It was the baronet.

The devil pick his bones, said the shocking Greville. I shall not be civil to him.

He is not *your* guest, Mr. Greville, said I—afraid that something affronting might pass between two spirits unmanageable; the one in a humour so whimsical, the other very likely to be moody.

True, true; replied he. I will be all silence and observation.—But I hope you will not *now* be for retiring.

It would be too particular, thought I, if I am: yet I should have been glad to do so.

The baronet paid his respects to every one in a very set and formal manner; nor distinguished me.

Silly, as vain! thought I: handsome fop! to imagine thy displeasure of consequence to me!

Mr. Greville, said Sir Hargrave, the town, I understand, is going to lose you.

The town, Sir Hargrave, cannot be said to have found me.

How can a man of your gallantry and fortune find himself employment in the country, in the winter, I wonder?

Very easily, when he has used himself to it, Sir Hargrave, and has seen abroad, in greater perfection than you can

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have them here, the kind of diversions you all run after, with so keen an appetite.

In *greater* perfection! I question that, Mr. Greville: and I have been abroad; though too early, I own, to make critical observations.

You may question it, Sir Hargrave: but *I* don't.

Have we not from Italy the most famous singers, Mr. Greville; and from thence, and from France, for our money, the most famous dancers in the world?

No, sir. They set too great a value in Italy, let me tell you, upon their finest voices, and upon their finest composers too, to let them turn strollers.

Strollers do you call them? Ha, ha, ha, hah!—*Princely* strollers, as we reward them! And as to composers, have we not Handel?

There you say something, Sir Hargrave. But you have but one Handel in England: they have several in Italy.

Is it possible? said every one.

Let me die, said the baronet, with a forced laugh, if I am not ready to think that Mr. Greville has run into the fault of people of less genius than himself. He has got such a taste for foreign performers, that he cannot think tolerably of those of his own country, be they ever so excellent.

Handel, Sir Hargrave, is not an Englishman: but I must say, that of every person present, I least expected from Sir Hargrave Pollexfen this observation.

[He then returned the baronet's laugh, and not without an air of mingled anger and contempt.]

Nor I this taste for foreign performances and compositions from Mr. Greville; for so long time as thou hast been a downright country gentleman.

[Indeed, thought I to myself, you seem both to have changed characters. But I know how it comes about: let one advance what he will, in the present humour of both, the other will contradict it. Mr. Greville knows nothing of music: what he said was from hearsay: and Sir Hargrave is no better grounded in it.]

A *downright country gentleman!* repeated Mr. Greville, measuring Sir Hargrave with his eye, and putting up his lip.

Why, pr'ythee now, Greville, thou what shall I call thee?

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thou art not offended, I hope, that we are not all of one mind; ha, ha, ha, hah!

I am offended at nothing you *say*, Sir Hargrave.

Nor I at anything you *look*, my dear; ha, ha, ha, hah.

Yet his looks shewed as much contempt for Mr. Greville as Mr. Greville's did for him. How easily might these combustible spirits have blown each other up! Mr. Reeves was once a little apprehensive of consequences from the airs of both.

Mr. Greville turned from Sir Hargrave to me: Well, Miss Byron, said he; but as to what we were talking about——

This he seemed to say on purpose, as I thought by his air, to alarm the baronet.

I beg pardon, said Sir Hargrave; turning with a stiff air to me: I beg pardon, Miss Byron, if I have intruded——

We were talking of indifferent things, Sir Hargrave, answered I—Mere matters of pleasantry.

I was more in *earnest* than in *jest*, Miss Byron, replied Mr. Greville.

We all, I believe, thought you very whimsical, Mr. Greville, returned I.

What was sport to you, madam, is death to me.

Poor Greville! Ha, ha, ha, hah (affectedly laughed the baronet): but I know you are a joker. You are a man of wit—[This a little softened Mr. Greville, who had begun to look grave upon Sir Hargrave]—Come, pr'ythee, man, give thyself up to me for this night; and I will carry thee to a private concert, where none but choice spirits are admitted; and let us see if music will not divert these gloomy airs, that sits so ill upon the face of one of the liveliest men in the kingdom.

Music! Ay, if Miss Byron will give us a song, and accompany it with the harpsichord, I will despise all other harmony.

Every one joined in his request: and I was not backward to oblige them, as I thought the conversation bore a little too rough a cast, and was not likely to take a smoother turn.

Mr. Greville, who always enjoys any jest that tends to reflect on our sex, begged me to sing that whimsical song set by Galliard, which once my uncle made me sing at

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Selby House, in Mr. Greville's hearing. You were not there, Lucy, that day, and perhaps may not have the book, as Galliard is not a favourite with you.

CHLOE, by all the powers above,
To *Damon* vowed eternal love:
A rose adorned her sweeter breast;
She on a leaf the vow imprest,
But Zephyr, by her side at play.
Love, *vow*, and *leaf*, blew quite away.

The gentlemen were very lively on the occasion, and encored it: but I told them, that as they must be better pleased with the jest on our sex contained in it, than they could be with the music, I would not, for the sake of their own politeness, oblige them.

You will favour us, however, with your *Discreet Lover*, Miss Byron, said Mr. Greville. That is a song written entirely upon your own principles.

Well, then, I will give you, said I, set by the same hand,

THE DISCREET LOVER.

Ye fair, that would be blest in love,
Take your pride a little lower;
Let the swain whom you approve,
Rather *like* you, than *adore*.

Love, that rises into pass
Soon will end in hate or strife
But from tender inclinati
Flow the *lasting* joys of life.

These two light pieces put the gentlemen into good humour; and a deal of silly stuff was said to me, by way of compliment, on the occasion, by Sir Hargrave and Mr. Greville: not one word of which I believed.

The baronet went away first, to go to his concert. He was very cold in his behaviour to me at taking leave, as he had been all the time.

Mr. Greville soon after left us, intending to set out this morning.

He snatched my hand at going. I was afraid of a second savage freedom, and would have withdrawn it.—Only one sigh over it; but one sigh. Oh—! said he, an Oh, half a

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yard long—and pressed it with his lips—But remember, madam, you are watched: I have half a dozen spies upon you; and the moment you find the man you can favour, up comes your Greville, cuts a throat, and flies his country.

He stopt at the parlour-door—One letter, Miss Byron—Receive but one letter from me.

No, Mr. Greville; but I wish you well.

Wishes! that, like a bishop's blessing, cost you nothing. I was going to say, *No*, for you: but you were too quick. It had been some pleasure to have denied *myself*, and prevented the mortification of a denial from *you*.

He went away; every one wishing him a good journey, and speaking favourably of the odd creature. Mrs. Reeves, in particular, thought fit to say, that he was the most entertaining of all my lovers: but if so, what is it they call entertaining? And what are those *others*, whom they call my lovers?

The man, said I, is an immoral man: and had he not got above blushes, and above being hurt by love, he could not have been so gay, and so *entertaining*, as you call it.

Miss Byron said true, said Mr. Reeves. I never knew a man who could make a jesting matter of the passion in the presence of the object, so very deeply in love, as to be hurt by a disappointment. There sits my saucebox. Did I ever make a jest of my love to you, madam?

No indeed, sir: had I not thought you most *deplorably* in earnest, you had not had any of my pity.

Why, look ye there, now! That's a declaration in point. Either Mr. Orme, or Mr. Fowler, must be the happy man, Miss Byron.

Indeed neither.

But why? They have both good estates. They both adore you. Sir Hargrave I see you cannot have. Mr. Greville dies not for you, though he would be glad to live with you. Mr. Fenwick is a still less eligible man, I think. Where can you be better than with one of the two I have named?

You speak seriously, cousin: I will not answer lightly: but neither of those gentlemen can be the man: yet I esteem them both, because they are good men.

Well, but don't you pity them?

I don't know what to say to that: you hold that pity is

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but one remove from love: and to say I *pity* a man who professes to love me, because I cannot consent to be his, carries with it, I think, an air of arrogance, and looks as if I believed he must be unhappy without me, when possibly there may be hundreds of women, with any one of whom he might be more truly happy.

Well, this is in character from you, Miss Byron: but may I ask you now, which of the two gentlemen, Mr. Orme, or Mr. Fowler, were you obliged to have *one* of them, would you choose?

Mr. Orme, I frankly answer. Have I not told Mr. Fowler so?

Well, then, what are your objections, may I ask, to Mr. Orme? He is not a disagreeable man in his person. You own that you think him a good man. His sister loves you; and you love her. What is your objection to Mr. Orme?

I don't know what to say. I hope I should perform my duty to the man to whom I shall give my vows, be he who he will: but I am not in haste to marry. If a single woman *knows* her own happiness, she will find that the time from eighteen to twenty-four is the happiest part of her life. If she stay till she *is* twenty-four, she has time to look about her, and if she has more lovers than one, is enabled to choose without having reason, on looking back, to reproach herself for hastiness. Her fluttering, her romantic age (we all know something of it, I doubt), is over by twenty-four, or it will hold too long; and she is then fit to take her resolutions, and to settle. I have more than once hinted, that I should be afraid to engage with one who thinks *too highly* of me beforehand. Nothing violent can be lasting, and I could not bear, when I have given a man my heart with my hand (and they never should be separated), that he should behave to me with less affection than he shewed to me before I was his. As I wish not *now* to be made an idol of, I may the more reasonably expect the constancy due to friendship, and not to be affronted with his indifference after I have given him my whole self. In other words, I could not bear to have my love slighted; or to be despised for it, instead of being encouraged to shew it. And how shall extravagant passion warrant hopes of this nature—if the man be not a man

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of gratitude, of principle, and a man whose love is founded in reason, and whose object is *mind*, rather than *person*?

But Mr. Orme, replied Mr. Reeves, is all this. *Such*, I believe, is his love.

Be it so. But I cannot love him so well as to wish to be his (a man, I have heard my uncle, as well as Sir Hargrave, say, is *his own;* a woman is a *man's;*) if I cannot take delight in the thought of bearing my part of the yoke with him: in the belief, that, in case of a contrariety of sentiments, I cannot give up *my* judgment, in points indifferent, from the good opinion I have of *his;* what but a fondness for the state, and an irksomeness in my present situation, could bias me in favour of *any* man? Indeed, my cousin, I must love the man to whom I would give my hand, well enough to be able, on cool deliberation, to *wish* to be his wife; and for *his* sake (with all my whole heart) choose to quit the single state, in which I am very happy.

And you are sure that your indifference to Mr. Orme is not, either directly or indirectly, owing to his obsequious love of you; and to the *milkiness of his nature,* as Shakespeare calls it?

Very sure! All the leaning towards him that I have, in preference, as I think, to every other man who has beheld me with partiality, is, on the contrary, owing to the grateful sense I have of his respect to me, and to the gentleness of his nature. Does not my behaviour to Mr. Greville, to Mr. Fenwick, to Sir Hargrave, compared with my treatment of Mr. Orme and Mr. Fowler, confirm what I say?

Then you are, as indeed I have always thought you, a nonsuch of a woman.

Not so; your own lady, whom you first brought to pity you, as I have heard you say, is an instance that I am not.

Well, that's true: but is she not, at the same time, an example, that pity *melts the soul to love?*

I have no doubt, said Mrs. Reeves, but Miss Byron may be brought to love the man she can pity.

But, madam, said I, did you not let pity grow into love, before you married Mr. Reeves?

I believe I did; smiling.

Well then I promise you, Mr. Reeves, when that comes

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to be the case with me, I will not give pain to a man I can like to marry.

Very well, replied Mr. Reeves: and I daresay, that at last Mr. Orme will be the man. And yet how you will get off with Sir Hargrave, I cannot tell. For Lady Betty Williams, this very day, told me, that he declared to her, he was resolved you should be his. And she has promised him all her interest with you, and with us; and is astonished that you can refuse a man of his fortune and address; and who has many, very many, admirers, among people of the first rank.

The baronet is at the door. I suppose he will expect to see me.

—o—

Wednesday Afternoon.

SIR HARGRAVE is just gone. He desired to talk with me alone. I thought I might very well decline obliging him, as he had never scrupled to say to me all he had a mind to say before my cousins; and as he had thought himself of consequence enough to behave moodily; and even made *this* request rather with an air of expectation, than of respect; and I accordingly desired to be excused. He stalked about. My cousins, first one, then the other, withdrew. His behaviour had not been so agreeable, as to deserve this compliance: I was vexed they did.

He offered, as soon as they were gone, to take my hand. I withdrew it.

Madam (said he, very impertinently angry), you would not do thus to Mr. Greville: you would not do thus to *any* man but me.

Indeed, sir, I would, were I left alone with him.

You see, madam, that I cannot forbear visiting you. My heart and soul are devoted to you. I own I have pride. Forgive me; it is piqued. I did not believe I should have been rejected by any lady, who had no dislike to a change of condition; and was disengaged. You declare that you are so; and I am willing, I am desirous to believe you—And yet that Greville.

There he stopt, as expecting me to speak.

To what purpose, Sir Hargrave, do you expect an answer to what you hint about Mr. Greville? It is not my way to

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behave with incivility to any man who professes a regard for me——

Except to me, madam——

Self-partiality, sir, and nothing else, could cause you to make this exception.

Well, madam, but as to Mr. Greville——

Pray, Sir Hargrave——

And pray, Miss Byron——

I have never yet seen the man who is to be my husband.

By G—! said the wretch, fiercely (almost in the language of Mr. Greville on the like occasion), but you have—And if you are not engaged in your affections, the *man* is before you.

If this, Sir Hargrave, is all you wanted to say to me, and would not be denied saying, it might have been said before my cousins. I was for leaving him.

You shall not go. I beg, madam—Putting himself between me and the door.

What further would Sir Hargrave say [standing still, and angry]? What further would Sir Hargrave say?

Have you, madam, a dislike to matrimony?

What right have you, sir, to ask me this question?

Do you ever intend to enter into the state?

Perhaps I may, if I meet with a man to whom I can give my whole heart.

And cannot that be I?—Let me implore you, madam. I will kneel to you [and down he dropt on his knees]. I cannot live without you.

For God's sake, madam!—Your pity, your mercy, your gratitude, your love! I could not do this before anybody, unless assured of favour. I implore your favour.

Foolish man! It was plain, that this kneeling supplication was premeditated.

Oh, sir, what undue humility!—Could I have received your address, none of this had been necessary.

Your pity, madam, once more; your gratitude, your mercy, your love?

Pray, sir, rise.

He swore by his God, that he would not, till I had given him hope——

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No hope can I give you, sir. It would be cheating, it would be deluding you, it would not be honest, to give you hope.

You objected to my morals, madam: have you any other objection?

Need there any other?

But I can clear myself.

To God, and to your conscience, then do it, sir. I want you not to clear yourself to me.

But, madam, the clearing myself to you would be clearing myself to God, and my conscience.

What language is this, sir? But you can be nothing to me: indeed you can be nothing to me.—Rise, sir; rise, or I leave you.

I made an effort to go. He caught my hand; and arose —Then kissed it, and held it between both his.

For God's sake, madam——

Pray, Sir Hargrave——

Your objections? I insist upon knowing your objections. My *person*, madam—Forgive me, I am not used to boast— My *person*, madam——

Pray, Sir Hargrave.

—Is not contemptible. My *fortune*——

God bless you, sir, with your fortune.

—Is not inconsiderable. My *morals*——

Pray, Sir Hargrave! Why this enumeration to me?

—Are as unexceptionable as those of most young men of fashion in the present age.

[I am sorry if this be true, thought I to myself.]

You have reason, I hope, sir, to be glad of that.

My *descent*——

Is honourable, sir, no doubt.

My *temper* is not bad. I am thought to be a man of vivacity, and of cheerfulness.—I have *courage*, madam— And this should have been seen, had I found reason to dread a competitor in your favour.

I thought you were enumerating your *good* qualities, Sir Hargrave.

Courage, madam, magnanimity in a man, madam——

Are great qualities, sir: courage in a right cause, I mean. Magnanimity, you know, sir, is greatness of mind.

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And so it is; and I hope——

And I, Sir Hargrave, hope you have great reason to be satisfied with *your*-self: but it would be very grievous to me, if I had not the liberty so to act, so to govern myself, in essential points, as should leave me as well satisfied with *my*-self.

This, I hope, *may* be the case, madam, if you encourage my passion: and let me assure you, that no man breathing ever loved a woman as I love you. My *person*, my *fortune*, my *morals*, my *descent*, my *temper* (a man in such a case as this may be allowed to do himself justice), all unexceptionable; let me die if I can account for your—your—your refusal of me in so peremptory, in so unceremonious a manner, slap-dash, as I may say, and no one objection to make, or which you will condescend to make!

You say, sir, that you love me above all women: would you, *can* you, be so little nice, as to wish to marry a woman who does not prefer you to all men?—If you *are*, let me tell you, sir, that you have assigned a reason against yourself, which I think I ought to look upon as conclusive.

I make no doubt, madam, that my behaviour to you after marriage, will induce you, in gratitude as well as justice, to prefer me to all men.

Your behaviour *after* marriage, sir!—Never will I trust to that, where——

Where what, madam?

No need of entering into particulars, sir. You see that we cannot be of the same mind. You, Sir Hargrave, have no doubt of your *merit*.——

I know, madam, that I should make it the business as well as pleasure of my life, to deserve you.

You value yourself upon your *fortune*, sir——

Only as it gives me power to make you happy.

Riches never yet, of themselves, made anybody happy. I have already as great a fortune as I wish for. You think yourself *polite*——

Polite, madam!—And I hope——

The whole of what I mean, Sir Hargrave, is this: you have a very high opinion of yourself: you may have reason for it; since you must know yourself, and your own heart, better than I can pretend to do: but would you, let me ask

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you, make choice of a woman for a wife, who frankly owns, that she cannot think so highly as you imagine she *ought* to think of you?—In justice to yourself, sir——

By my soul, madam, haughtily, you are the only woman who could thus——

Well, sir, perhaps I am. But will not this singularity convince you, that I can never make you happy, nor you me? You tell me, that you think highly of me; but if I cannot think so highly of you, pray, sir, let me be entitled to the same freedom in my refusal that governs you in your choice.

He walked about the room; and gave himself airs that shewed greater inward than even outward emotion.

I had a mind to leave him; yet was not willing to withdraw abruptly, intending, and hoping, to put an end to all his expectations for the future. I therefore in a manner asked for leave to withdraw.

I presume, sir, that nothing remains to be said but what may be said before my cousins. And, courtesying, was going.

He told me, with a passionate air, that he was half distracted; and complained of the use I made of the power I had over him. And as I had near opened the door, he threw himself on his knees to me against it, and undesignedly hurt my finger with the lock.

He was grieved. I made light of it, though in pain, that he might not have an opportunity to flourish upon it, and to shew a tenderness which I doubt is not very natural to him.

How little was I affected with *his* kneeling, to what I was with the same posture in Sir Rowland! Sir Hargrave supplicated me as before. I was forced, in answer, to repeat some of the same things that I had said before.

I would fain have parted civilly. He would not permit me to do so. Though he was on his knees, he mingled passion, and even indirect menaces, with his supplications. I was forced to declare, that I never more would receive his visits.

This declaration, he vowed, would make him desperate, and he cared not what became of him.

I often begged him to rise; but to no purpose, till I declared that I would stay no longer with him: and then he arose, rapt out an oath or two; again called me proud and ungrateful; and followed me into the other room to my

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cousins. He could hardly be civil to them: he walked two or three turns about the room. At last, forgive me, Mr. Reeves, forgive me, Mrs. Reeves, said he, bowing to them; more stiffly to me—And you *forbid* my future visits, madam, said he, with a face of malice.

'I do, sir; and that for both our sakes. You have greatly discomposed me.

Next time, madam, I have the honour of attending you, it will be, I hope—[He stopt a moment, but still looking fiercely]—to a happier purpose. And away he went.

Mr. Reeves was offended with him, and discouraged me not in my resolution to avoid receiving his future visits. You will now, therefore, hear very little farther in my letters of this Sir Hargrave Pollexfen.

And yet I wish I do not see him very soon. But it will be in company enough, if I do: at the masquerade, I mean, to-morrow night; for he never misses going to such entertainments.

Our dresses are ready. Mr. Reeves is to be a hermit; Mrs. Reeves, a nun; Lady Betty, a lady abbess: but I by no means like mine, because of its gaudiness: the very *thing* I was afraid of.

They call it the dress of an Arcadian princess; but it falls not in with any of my notions of the pastoral dress of Arcadia.

A white Paris net sort of cap, glittering with spangles, and encircled by a chaplet of artificial flowers, with a little white feather perking from the left ear, is to be my head-dress.

My mask is Venetian.

My hair is to be complimented with an appearance, because of its natural ringlets, as they call my curls, and to shade my neck.

Tucker and ruffles blond lace.

My shape is also said to be consulted in this dress. A kind of waistcoat of blue satin trimmed with silver point d'Espagne, the skirts edged with silver fringe, is made to sit close to my waist by double clasps, a small silver tassel at the ends of each clasp; all set off with bugles and spangles; which make a mighty glitter.

But I am to be allowed a kind of scarf of white Persian

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silk; which, gathered at the top, is to be fastened to my shoulders, and to fly loose behind me.

Bracelets on my arms.

They would have given me a crook; but I would not submit to that. It would give me, I said, an air of confidence to aim to manage it with any tolerable freedom; and I was apprehensive, that I should not be thought to want *that* from the dress itself. A large Indian fan was not improper for the expected warmth of the place; and that contented me.

My petticoat is of blue satin trimmed and fringed as my waistcoat. I am not to have a hoop that is perceivable. They wore not hoops in Arcadia.

What a sparkling figure shall I make! Had the ball been what they call a subscription ball, at which people dress with more glare than at a common one, this dress would have been more tolerable.

But they all say, that I shall be kept in countenance by masks as extravagant, and even more ridiculous.

Be that as it may, I wish the night were over. I daresay it will be the last diversion of this kind I ever shall be at; for I never had any notion of masquerades.

Expect particulars of all in my next. I reckon you will be impatient for them. But pray, my Lucy, be fanciful, as I sometimes am, and let me know how you think everything will be beforehand; and how many pretty fellows you imagine, in this dress, will be slain by your HARRIET BYRON.

—o—

LETTER XXIII.

Mr. Reeves to George Selby, Esq.

Friday, February 17.

DEAR MR. SELBY,—No one, at present, but yourself, must see the contents of what I am going to write.

You must not be too much surprised.

But how shall I tell you the news; the dreadful news?—My wife has been ever since three this morning in violent hysterics upon it.

You must not—But how shall I say, *you* must not, be too much affected, when *we* are unable to support ourselves?

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Oh, my cousin Selby!—We know not what is become of our dearest Miss Byron.

I will be as particular as my grief and surprise will allow. There is a necessity for it, as you will find.

Mr. Greville, as I apprehend—But to particulars first.

We were last night at the ball in the Haymarket.

The chairmen who carried the dear creature, and who, as well as *our* chairmen, were engaged for the night, were inveigled away to drink somewhere. They promised Wilson, my cousin's servant, to return in half an hour.

It was then but little more than twelve.

Wilson waited near two hours, and they not returning, he hired a chair to supply their place.

Between two and three, we all agreed to go home. The dear creature was fatigued with the notice everybody took of her. Everybody admired her. She wanted to go before; but Lady Betty prevailed on her to stay a little longer.

I waited on her to her chair, and saw her in it before I attended Lady Betty and my wife to theirs.

I saw that neither the chair, nor the chairmen, were those who brought her. I asked the meaning; and received the above particulars after she was in the chair.

She hurried into it because of her dress, and being warm, and no less than four gentlemen following her to the very chair.

It was then near three.

I ordered Wilson to bid the chairmen stop when they had got out of the crowd, till Lady Betty's chair, and mine, and my wife's, joined them.

I saw her chair move, and Wilson with his lighted flambeaux before it; and the four masks who followed her to the chair return into the house.

When our servants could not find that her chair had stopt, we supposed that, in the hurry, the fellow heard not my orders: and directed our chairmen to proceed; not doubting but we should find her got home before us.

We had before agreed to be carried directly home; declining Lady Betty's invitation to resume our own dresses at her house, where we dressed for the ball.

We were very much surprised at finding her not arrived: but concluding that, by mistake, she was carried to Lady

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Betty's, and was there expecting us, we sent thither immediately.

But, good God! what was our consternation, when the servants brought us word back, that Lady Betty had not either seen or heard of her!

Mr. Greville, as I apprehend——

But let me give you all the lights on which I ground my surmises.

Last night Lady Betty Williams had a hint given her, as she informed me at the masquerade, that Mr. Greville, who took leave of my cousin on Tuesday evening, in order to set out for Northamptonshire the next morning, was neither gone, nor intended to go; being, on the contrary, resolved to continue in town perdue, in order to watch my cousin's visitors.

He had indeed told her, that she would have half a dozen spies upon her; and threw out some hints of jealousy of two of her visitors.

Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, in a harlequin dress, was at the ball; he soon discovered our lovely cousin; and, notwithstanding his former ill-nature on being rejected by her, addressed her with the politeness of a man accustomed to public places.

He found me out at the side-board a little before we went off; and asked me, if I had not seen Mr. Greville there? I said, no.

He asked me, if I had not observed a mask distinguished by a broad-brimmed half-slouched hat, with a high flat crown, a short black cloak, a dark lantern in his hand, holding it up to every one's mask; and who, he said, was saluted by everybody as Guido Vaux? That person, he said, was Mr. Greville.

I did indeed observe this person; but recollected not that he had the air of Mr. Greville; but thought him a much more bulky man. But that, as he intended to have it supposed he had left the town, might be easily managed.

Mr. Greville, you know, is a man of enterprise.

He came to town, having professedly no other material business but to give obstruction to my cousin's visitors. He saw she had two new ones. He talked at first of staying in town, and partaking of its diversions, and even of bespeaking a new equipage.

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But all of a sudden, though expecting Mr. Fenwick would come up, he pretended to leave the town, and to set out directly for Northamptonshire, without having obtained any concession from my cousin in his favour.

Laying all these circumstances together, I think it is hardly to be doubted but Mr. Greville is at the bottom of this black affair.

You will therefore take such steps on these lights as your prudence will suggest to you. If Mr. Greville is not come down—If Mr. Fenwick—What would I say?

The less noise, however, the affair makes, till we can come at certainty, the better.

How I dread what that certainty may be!—Dear creature!

But I am sure you will think it advisable to keep this dreadful affair from her poor grandmother. And I hope your good lady—Yet *her* prudent advice may be necessary.

I have six people out at different parts of the town, who are to make inquiries among chairmen, coachmen, &c.

Her new servant cannot be a villain—What can one say? —What can one think?

We have sent to his sister, who keeps an inn in Smithfield. She has heard nothing of him.

I have sent after the chairmen who carried her to this cursed masquerade. Lady Betty's chairmen, who had provided the chairs, know them, and their number. They were traced with a fare from Whyte's to Berkeley-square.

Something may be discovered by means of those fellows, if they were tampered with. They are afraid, I suppose, to come to demand their but half-earned money. Woe be to them if they come out to be rascals!

I had half a suspicion of Sir Hargrave, as well from the character given us of him by a friend of mine, as because of his unpolite behaviour to the dear creature on her rejecting him: and sent to his house in Cavendish-square, to know if he were at home; and, if he were, at what time he returned from the ball.

Answer was brought, that he was in bed, and they supposed would not be stirring till dinner time, when he expected company; and that he returned not from the ball till between four and five this morning.

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We sent to Mr. Greville's lodgings. He has actually discharged them; and the people think (as he told them so) that he is set out for the country. But he is master of contrivances enough to manage this. There can be no thought that he would give out otherwise to them, than he did to us. Happy! had we found him not gone.

Mr. Greville *must* be the man!

You will be so good as to despatch the bearer instantly with what information can be got about Mr. Greville. Ever, ever yours! ARCHIBALD REEVES.

—o—

LETTER XXIV.

Mr. Selby to Archibald Reeves, Esq.

[In answer to the preceding.]

Saturday, February 18.

OH, Mr. Reeves!—Dear sweet child!—Flower of the world!——

But how could I keep such dreadful tidings within my own breast?——

How could I conceal my consternation?—My wife saw it. She would know the cause of it.

I could not tell her the fatal news—Fatal news indeed! It will be immediate death to her poor grandmother——

We must keep it from her as long as we can!—But *keep* it from her!—And *is* the dearest creature spirited away?—Oh, Mr. Reeves!——

I gave my wife your letter. She fainted away before she had read it through.

Masquerades, I have generally heard said, were more silly than wicked: but they are now, I am convinced, the most profligate of all diversions.

Almost distracted, cousin!—You may *well* be so: we shall all be *quite* distracted—Dear, dear creature! what may she not have suffered by this time?

Why parted we with such a jewel out of our sight?

You *would* not be denied: you *would* have her to that cursed town.

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Some damned villain, to be sure!—Greville it is not.

Greville was seen late last night, alighting at his own house from a post-chaise. He had nobody with him.

In half an hour, late as it was, he sent his compliments to us, to let us know that he had left the dear child well, and (in his usual style) happier than she would make him. He knows that our lives are bound up in hers.

Find out where she is: and find her safe and well: or we will never forgive those who were the cause of her going to London.

Dear soul! she was over-persuaded!—She was not fond of going!

The sweetest, obliging creature!—What is now become of her!—What by this time may she not have suffered!

Search everywhere—But you will, no doubt!—Suspect everybody—This Lady Betty Williams—Such a plot must have a woman in it. Was she not Sir Hargrave's friend? —This Sir Hargrave—Greville it could not be. Had we not the proof I mentioned, Greville, bad as he is, could not be such a villain.

The first moment you have any tidings, bad or good, spare no expense——

Greville was this moment here.

We could not see him. We did not let him know the matter.

He is gone away, in great surprise, on the servants telling him that we had received some bad news, which made us unfit to see anybody. The servants could not tell him what: yet they all guess by your livery, and by our grief, that something has befallen their beloved young lady. They are all in tears—And they look at us, when they attend us, with *such* inquisitive, yet silent grief!—We are speechless before them; and tell them our wills by motions, and not by words.

Good God!—After so many happy years!—Happy in ourselves! to be at last in so short a time made the most miserable of wretches!

But this had not been, if—But no more—Good God of heaven! what will become of my poor aunt Shirley!—Lucy,

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Nancy, will go distracted—But no more—Hasten your next —and forgive this distracted letter. I know not what I have written: but I am yours, GEORGE SELBY.

—o—

LETTER XXV.

Mr. Reeves to George Selby, Esq.

[In continuation of Letter XXIII.]

LADY BETTY'S chairmen have found out the first chairmen.

The fellows were made almost dead drunk. They are sure something was put into their liquor. They have been hunting after the footmen, who enticed them, and drank them down. They described their livery to be brown, trimmed and turned up with yellow; and are in the service of a merchant's relict, who lives either in Mark-lane, or Mincing-lane, they forgot which; but have not yet been able to find them out. Their lady, they said, was at the masquerade. They were very officious to scrape acquaintance with them. We know not anybody who gives this livery: so no lights can be obtained by this part of the information. A cursed deep-laid villany!—The fellows are resolved, they say, to find out these footmen, if above ground; and the chairmen who were hired on their failure.

Every hour we have one messenger or other returning with something to say; but hitherto with nothing to the purpose. This has kept me within. Oh, Mr. Selby, I know not what to direct! I know not what to do! I send them out again as fast as they return: yet rather shew my despair, than my hope.

Surely this villany must be Mr. Greville's. Though I have but just despatched away my servant to you, I am impatient for his return.

I will write every hour, as anything offers, that I may have a letter ready to send you by another man, the moment we hear anything. And yet I expect not to hear anything material, but from you.

We begin to suspect the servant (that Wilson) whom my

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cousin so lately hired. Were *he* clear of the matter, either he or the chairmen he hired, must have been heard of. He would have returned. They could not all three be either murdered or secreted.

These cursed masquerades!—Never will I——

Oh, Mr. Selby! Her servant is, must be a villain!—Sarah, my dear cousin's servant—(My poor wife can think of nothing. She is extremely ill)—Sarah took it into her head to have the specious rascal's trunk broke open. It felt light, and he had talked, but the night before, of his stock of clothes and linen, to the other servants. There was nothing of value found in it; not of *sixpence* value. The most specious villain, if a villain. Everybody liked him. The dear creature herself was pleased with him. He knew everything and everybody—Cursed be he for his adroitness and knowledge? We had made too many inquiries after a servant for her.

—o—

Eleven o'clock.

I am just returned from Smithfield. From the villain's sister. He comes out to be a villain—This Wilson, I mean—A practised villain!

The woman shook her head at the inquiry which I made, half out of breath, after what was become of him. She was afraid, she said, that all was not right: but was sure her brother had not robbed.

He had been guilty, I said, of a villany that was a thousand times worse than robbery.

She was inquisitive about it; and I hinted to her what it was.

Her brother, she said, was a young man of parts and understanding, and would be glad, she was sure, of getting a livelihood by honest services. It was a sad thing that there should be such masters in the world as would put servants upon bad practices.

I asked after the character of that Bagenhall, whose service her brother last lived in? and imprudently I threatened her brother.

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Ah, sir! was all the answer she made, shaking her head.

I repeated my question, Who was that Bagenhall?——

Excuse me, sir, said she, I will give no other answer, till I hear whether my brother's life may be in danger or not. She abhorred, she said, all base practices as much as anybody could do; and she was sorry for the lady, and for me.

I then offered to be the making of her brother, were it possible to engage him before any violence was done to the lady. I asked, if she knew where to send to him?

Indeed she did not. She dared to say, she should not hear of him for one while. Whenever he had been drawn in to assist in any out of the way pranks [see, Mr. Selby, a practised villain!], he kept away from her till all was blown over. Those who would take such steps, she feared, would by this time have done the mischief.

How I raved!

I offered her money, a handsome sum, if she would tell me what she knew of that Bagenhall, or of any of her brother's employers: but she refused to say one word more, till she knew whether her brother's life were likely to be affected or not.

I left her, and hastened home, to inquire after what might have happened in my absence: but will soon see her again, in hopes she may be wrought upon to drop some hints, by which something may be discovered—But all this time, what may be the fate of the dear sufferer!—I cannot bear my own thoughts!

Lady Betty is inexpressibly grieved——

I have despatched a man and horse (God knows to what purpose) to a friend I have at Reading, to get him to inquire after the character of this Bagenhall. There is such a man, and he is a man of pleasure, as Sir John Allestree informs me.—Accursed villain, this Wilson! He could not bear with his master's constant bad hours, and profligate course of life, as he told our servants, and Mrs. Sarah!—Specious impostor!

—o—

One o'clock.

Lady Betty's chairmen have found out, and they brought with them, one of the fellows whom that vile Wilson hired.

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The other was afraid to come. I have secured this fellow: yet he seems to be ingenuous; and I have promised, that if he prove innocent, he shall be rewarded instead of punished; and the two chairmen, on this promise, are gone to try to prevail upon his partner to come, were it but to release the other, as both insisted upon their innocence.

And now will you be impatient to know what account this fellow gives.

Oh, Mr. Selby! The dear, dear creature—But before I can proceed, I must recover my eyes.

—o—

Two o'clock.

This fellow's name is Macpherson. His partner's, M'Dermot. This is Macpherson's account of the matter.

Wilson hired them to carry his young lady to Paddington —To Paddington! A vile dog!——

They objected distance and danger; the latter, as Macpherson owns, to heighten the value of the service.

As to the danger, Wilson told him, they would be met by three others of his fellow-servants, armed, at the first fields: and, as to the distance, they would be richly rewarded: and he gave them a crown a-piece earnest, and treated them besides with brandy.

To prevent their curiosity, and entirely to remove their difficulties, the villain told them, that this young lady was an heiress, and had agreed to go off from the masquerade with her lover: but that the gentleman would not appear to them, till she came to the very house, to which she was conveyed.

She thinks, said the hellish villain, that she is to be carried to May-Fair chapel, and to be married directly; and that the minister (unseasonable as the hour is) will be there in readiness. But the gentleman, who is a man of the utmost honour, intends first to try whether he cannot obtain her friends' consent. So when she finds her way lengthened, proceeded the vile wretch, she will perhaps be frightened, and will ask me questions. I would not for the world disoblige her; but here she must be cheated for her own sake; and, when all is over, will value me the more for the innocent imposture. But whatever orders she may give you,

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observe none but mine, and follow me. You shall be richly rewarded, repeated the miscreant. Should she even cry out, mind it not: she is full of fears, and hardly holds in one mind for an hour together.

He farther cautioned them not to answer any questions which might possibly be asked of them, by the person who should conduct his young lady to her chair; but refer to himself: and in case any other chairs were to go in company with hers, he bid them fall behind, and follow his flambeaux.

Macpherson says, that she drew the curtains close (because of her dress, no doubt) the moment I had left her, after seeing her in the chair.

The fellows, thus prepossessed and instructed, speeded away, without stopping for our chairs. Yet the dear creature must have heard me give that direction.

They had carried her a great way before she called out: and *then* she called three times before they would hear her: at the third time they stopt, and her servant asked her commands. Where am I, William, said she? Just at home, madam, answered he. Surely you have taken a strange roundabout way. We *are* come about, said the rascal, on purpose to avoid the crowd of chairs and coaches.

They proceeded onwards, and were joined by three men, as Wilson had told them they would; but they fancied one of them to be a gentleman; for he was muffled up in a cloak, and had a silver-hilted sword in his hand: but he spake not. He gave no directions: and all three kept aloof, that they might not be seen by her.

At Marybone, she again called out; William, William, said she, with vehemence: the Lord have mercy upon me! Where are you going to carry me? Chairmen, stop! Stop, chairmen! Set me down!—William!—Call my servant, chairmen!——

Dear soul! Her servant! Her devil!

The chairmen called him. They lifted up the head. The side curtains were still undrawn, and M'Dermot stood so close, that she could not see far before her. Did you not tell me, said the villain to them, that it was not far about?—see how you have frightened my lady!—Madam, we are now almost at home.

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They proceeded with her, saying, they had indeed mistaken their way; but they were just there; and hurried on.

She then undrew the side curtain.—Good God of heaven protect me! they heard her say—I am in the midst of fields —They were then at Lissom Green.

They heard her pray; and Macpherson said, he began then to conclude, that the lady was too much frightened, and *too pious,* to be in a love plot.

But, nevertheless, beckoned by their villainous guide, they hurried on: and then she screamed out, and happening to see one of the three men, she begged his help for God's sake.

The fellow blustered at the chairmen, and bid them stop. She asked for Grosvenor-street. She was to be carried, she said, to Grosvenor-street.

She was just there, that fellow said.—It can't be, sir! It can't be!—Don't I see fields all about me?—I am in the midst of fields, sir.

Grosvenor-square, madam, replied that villain; the trees and garden of Grosvenor-square.

What a strange way have you come about! cried her miscreant; and then trod out his flambeaux; while another fellow took the chairmen's lantern from them; and they had only a little glimmering star-light to guide them.

She then, poor dear soul! screamed so dismally, that Macpherson said, it went to his heart to hear her. But they following Wilson, who told them they were just *landed,* that was his word, he led them up a long garden walk, by a back-way. One of the three men having got before, opened the garden door, and held it in his hand; and by the time they got to the house to which the garden seemed to belong, the dear creature ceased screaming.

They too well saw the cause, when they stopt with her. She was in a fit.

Two women, by the assistance of the person in the cloak, helped her out, with great seeming tenderness. They said something in praise of her beauty, and expressed themselves concerned for her, as if they were afraid she was past recovery: which apparently startled the man in the cloak.

Wilson entered the house with those who carried in the dear creature; but soon came out to the chairmen. They

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saw the man in the cloak (who hung about the villain, and hugged him, as in joy) give the rascal money; who then put a guinea into each of their hands; and conveyed them through the garden again, to the door at which they entered; but refused them light, even so much as that of their own candle and lantern. However, he sent another man with them, who led them over rough and dirty by-ways into a path that pointed Londonward; but plainly so much about, with design to make it difficult for them to find out the place again.

The other fellow is brought hither! he tells exactly the same story.

I asked of both, what sort of a man he in the cloak was: but he so carefully muffled himself up, and so little appeared to them, either walking after them, or at the house, that I could gain no light from their description.

On their promise to be forthcoming, I have suffered them to go with Lady Betty's chairmen to try if they can trace out their own footsteps, and find the place.

How many hopeless things must a man do, in an exigence, who knows not what is right to be done!

I have inquired of Lady Betty, who it was that told her Mr. Greville was not gone out of town, but intended to lie perdue? and she named her informant. I asked, how the discourse came in? She owned a little awkwardly. I asked, whether that lady knew Mr. Greville? She could not say whether she did or not.

I went to that lady: Mrs. Preston, in New Bond-street. She had her intelligence, she told me, from Sir Hargrave Pollexfen: who had hinted to her, that he should take such notice of Mr. Greville, as might be attended with consequences; and she was the readier to intimate this to Lady Betty, in order to prevent mischief.

Now, Mr. Selby, as the intimation, that the dark-lantern figure at the masquerade was Mr. Greville, came from Sir Hargrave, and nobody else; and we saw nothing of him ourselves; how do we know—And yet Mr. Greville intended that we should believe him to be out of town—Yet even that intimation came from Sir Hargrave—And furthermore, was it not likely that he would take as much care to conceal

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himself from Sir Hargrave, as from us?—I will go instantly to Sir Hargrave's house. He was to dine at home, and with company. If I cannot see him; if he should be absent —But no more till I return.

Oh, Mr. Selby! I believe I have wronged Mr. Greville. The dear soul, I am afraid, is fallen into even worse hands than his.

I went to Sir Hargrave's house. He was *not* at home. He *was* at home. He had company with him. He was not to be spoken with. These were the different answers given me by his porter with as much confusion as I had impatience; and yet it was evident to me that he had his lesson given him. In short, I have reason to think, that Sir Hargrave came not home all night. The man in the cloak, I doubt, was he. Now does all that Sir John Allestree said of the malicious wickedness of this devilish man, and his arrogant behaviour to our dear Miss Byron, on her rejecting him, come fresh into my memory. And is she, can she be, fallen into the power of such a man?—Rather, much rather, may my first surmises prove true. Greville is surely (exceptionable as he is) a better man, at least a better natured man, than this; and he can have no thoughts less honourable than marriage: but this villain, if he *be* the villain—I cannot, I dare not pursue the thought.

The four chairmen are just returned. They think they have found the place; but, having gained some intelligence (intelligence which distracts me!) they hurried back for directions.

They had asked a neighbouring ale-house-keeper, if there were not a long garden (belonging to the house they suspected) and a back-door out of it to a dirty lane and fields. He answered in the affirmative. The front of this house faces the road.

They called for some hot liquors; and asked the landlord after the owners. He knew nothing of harm of them, he said. They had lived there near a twelvemonth in reputation. The family consisted of a widow, whose name is Awberry, her son and two daughters. The son (a man of about thirty ars of age) has a place in the custom-house, and only came

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down on a Saturday, and went up on Monday. But an odd circumstance, he said, had alarmed him that very morning.

He was at first a little shy of telling what it was. He loved, he said, to mind his own business: what other people did was nothing to him: but, at last, he told them, that about six o'clock in the morning he was waked by the trampling of horses; and, looking out of his window, saw a chariot and six, and three or four men on horseback, at the widow Awberry's door. He got up. The footmen and coachmen were very *hush*, not calling for a drop of liquor, though his doors were open: A rare instance, he said, where there were so many men-servants together, and a coachman one of them. This, he said, could not but give a greater edge to his curiosity.

About seven o'clock, one of the widow's daughters came to the door, with a lighted candle in her hand, and directed the chariot to drive up close to the house. The ale-house-keeper then slipt into an arbour-like porch, next door to the widow's; where he had not been three minutes before he saw two persons come to the door; the one a tall gentleman in laced clothes, who had his arms about the other, a person of middling stature, wrapt up in a scarlet cloak; and resisting, as one in great distress, the other's violence, and begging not to be put into the chariot, in a voice and accent that evidently shewed it was a woman.

The gentleman made vehement protestations of honour; but lifted the lady into the chariot. She struggled, and seemed to be in agonies of grief; and, on being lifted in, and the gentleman going in after her, she screamed out for help; and he observed in the struggling, that she had on, under her cloak, a silver-laced habit [the masquerade habit, no doubt!]: her screaming grew fainter and fainter, and her voice sounded to him as if her mouth were stopped: and the gentleman seemed to speak high, as if he threatened her.

Away drove the chariot. The servants rode after it.

In about half an hour, a coach and four came to the widow's door; the widow and her two daughters went into it, and took the same road.

The ale-house-keeper had afterwards the curiosity to ask the maid-servant, an ignorant country wench, whither her

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mistress went so early in the morning? She answered, they were gone to Windsor, or that way, and would not return, she believed, in a week.

O this damned Sir Hargrave! He has a house upon the forest. I have no doubt but he is the villain. Who knows what injuries the dear creature might have sustained before she was forced into the chariot?—God give me patience! Dear soul! Her prayers! Her struggling! Her crying out for help! Her mouth stopt! Oh, the villain!

I have ordered as many men and horses as two of my friends can furnish me with, to be added to two of my own (we shall be nine in all), to get ready with all speed. I will pursue the villain to the world's end, but I will find him.

Our first course shall be to his house at Windsor. If we find him not there, we will proceed to that Bagenhall's, near Reading.

It would be but losing time were I to go now to Paddington. And when the vile widow and her daughters are gone from home, and only an ignorant wench left, what can we learn of her more than is already told to us?

I have, however, accepted Lady Betty's offer of her steward's going with the two chairmen, to get what farther intelligence he can from Paddington, against my return.

I shall take what I have written with me, to form from it a letter less hurrying, less alarming, for your perusal, than this that I have written at such snatches of time, and under such dreadful uncertainties, would be to you, were I to send it; that is to say, if I have time, and if I am able to write with any certainty—Oh, that dreaded certainty!

At four in the morning the six men I borrow, and myself, and two of my servants, well armed, are to rendezvous at Hyde Park Corner. It is grievous that another night must pass. But so many people cannot be got together as two or three might.

My poor wife has made me promise to take the assistance of peace-officers, wherever I find either the villain, or the suffering angel.

Where the road parts, we shall divide, and inquire at every turnpike; and shall agree upon our places of meeting.

I am harassed to death: but my mind is the greatest sufferer.

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Oh, my dear Mr. Selby! we *have* tidings—God be praised, we have tidings—Not so happy, indeed, as were to be wished: yet the dear creature is living, and in honourable hands—God be praised!

Read the enclosed letter, directed to me.

SIR,—Miss Byron is in safe and honourable hands.

The first moment she could give any account of herself, she besought me to quiet your heart, and your lady's, with this information.

She has been cruelly treated.

Particulars, at present, she cannot give.

She was many hours speechless.

But don't fright yourselves: her fits, though not less frequent, are weaker and weaker.

The bearer will acquaint you who my brother is; to whom you owe the preservation and safety of the loveliest woman in England: and he will direct you to a house where you will be welcome with your lady (for Miss Byron cannot be removed), to convince yourselves that all possible care is taken of her, by, sir, your humble servant,

CHARLOTTE GRANDISON.

Friday, February 17.

In fits!—Has been cruelly treated!—Many hours speechless!—Cannot be removed!—Her solicitude, though hardly herself, *for our ease!*—Dearest, dear creature!—But you will rejoice with me, my cousins, that she is in such honourable hands.

What I have written must now go. I have no time to transcribe.

I have sent to my two friends to let them know, that I shall not have occasion for their people's assistance.

She is at a nobleman's house, the Earl of L———, near Colnebrook.

My wife, harassed and fatigued in mind as she has been on this occasion, and poorly in health, wanted to go with me: but it is best first for me to see how the dear creature is.

I shall set out before day, on horseback. My servant shall carry with him a portmanteau of things, ordered by my wife. My cousin must have made a strange appearance in her masquerade dress, to her deliverer.

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The honest man who brought the letter [he looks remarkably so; but had he a less agreeable countenance, he would have been received by us as an angel, for his happy tidings] was but just returned from Windsor, whither he had been sent early in the morning, to transact some business, when he was despatched away to us with the welcome letter. He could not, therefore, be so particular as we wished him. What he gathered was from the housekeeper; the men-servants, who were in the fray [a fray there was], being gone to town with their master. But what we learnt from him, is, briefly, as follows:

His master is Sir Charles Grandison; a gentleman who has not been long in England. I have often heard mention of his father, Sir Thomas, who died not long ago. This honest man knew not when to stop in his master's praise. He gives his young lady also an excellent character.

Sir Charles was going to town in his chariot and six when he met (most happily met!) our distressed cousin.

Sir Hargrave *is* the villain.

I am heartily sorry for suspecting Mr. Greville.

Sir Charles had earnest business in town; and he proceeded thither, after he had rescued the dear creature, and committed her to the care of his sister.—God for ever bless him!

The vile Sir Hargrave, as the servant understood, was wounded. Sir Charles, it seems, was also hurt. Thank God it was so slightly, as not to hinder him from pursuing his journey to town after the glorious act.

I would have given the honest man a handsome gratuity: but he so earnestly besought me to excuse him, declaring that he was under an obligation to the most generous of masters to decline all gifts, that I was obliged to withdraw my hand.

I will speed this way by Richard Fennell. I will soon send you farther particulars by the post: not unhappy ones, I hope.

Excuse, meantime, all that is amiss in a letter, the greatest part of which was written in such a dreadful uncertainty, and believe, that I will be, ever yours,

ARCHIBALD REEVES.

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LETTER XXVI.

Mr. Reeves to George Selby, Esq.

Saturday, Feb. 18.

DEAR SIR,—I am just returned from visiting my beloved cousin. You will be glad of every minute particular, as I can give it to you, relating to this shocking affair: and to her protector and his sister. There are not such another brother and sister in England.

I got to the hospitable mansion by nine this morning. I inquired after Miss Byron's health; and, on giving in my name, was shewn into a handsome parlour, elegantly furnished.

Immediately came down to me a very agreeable young lady; Miss Grandison. I gave her a thousand thanks for the honour of her letter, and the joyful information it had given me of the safety of one so deservedly dear to us.

She *must* be an excellent young lady, answered she. I have just left her—you must not see her yet——

Ah, madam, said I, and looked surprised and grieved, I believe.

Don't affright yourself, sir. Miss Byron will do very well: but she must be kept quiet. She has had a happy deliverance—She——

O madam! interrupted I, your generous, your noble brother——

Is the best of men, Mr. Reeves: his delight is in doing good.—And, as to this adventure, it has made him, I am sure, a very happy man.

But is my cousin, madam, so ill, that I cannot be allowed to see her for one moment?

She is but just come out of a fit. She fell into it in the relation she would have made of her story, on mentioning the villain's name by whom she has suffered. She could give only broken and imperfect accounts of herself all day yesterday, or you had heard from me sooner. When you see her, you must be very cautious of what you say to her. We have a skilful physician, by whose advice we proceed.

God for ever bless you, madam!

He has not long left her. He advises quiet. She has had

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a very bad night. Could she compose herself, could she get a little natural rest, the cure is performed. Have you breakfasted, sir?

Breakfasted, madam! My impatience to see my cousin allowed me not to think of breakfast.

You must breakfast with me, sir. And when that is over, if she is tolerable, we will acquaint her with your arrival, and go up together. I read your impatience, sir: we will make but a very short breakfasting. I was just *going* to breakfast.

She rang. It was brought in.

I longed, I said, as we sat at tea, to be acquainted with the particulars of the happy deliverance.

We avoid asking any questions that may affect her. I know very little of the particulars myself. My brother was in haste to get to town. The servants that were with him at the time, hardly dismounted: he doubted not but the lady (to whom he referred me for the gratifying my curiosity) would be able to tell me everything. But she fell into fits, and, as I told you, was so ill, on the recollection of what she had suffered———

Good God! said I, what *must* the dear creature have suffered!

—That we thought fit to restrain our curiosity, and so must you, till we see Sir Charles. I expect him before noon.

I am told, madam, that there was a skirmish. I hope Sir Charles———

I hope so too, Mr. Reeves, interrupted she. I long to see my brother as much as you can do to see your cousin—But on my apprehensions, he assured me, upon his honour, that he was but very slightly hurt. Sir Charles is no qualifier, sir, when he stakes his honour, be the occasion either light or serious.

I said, I doubted not but she was very much surprised at a lady's being brought in by Sir Charles, and in a dress so fantastic.

I was, sir. I had not left my chamber: but hastened down at the first word, to receive and welcome the stranger. My maid, out of breath, burst into my room—Sir Charles, madam, beseeches you this moment to come down. He has saved a lady from robbers (that was her report), a very fine

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lady! and is come back with her. He begs that you will come down this instant.

I was too much surprised at my brother's unexpected return, and too much affected with the lady's visible grief and terror, to attend to her dress, when I first went down. She was sitting, dreadfully trembling, and Sir Charles next her, in a very tender manner, assuring her of his and of his sister's kindest protection. I saluted her, continued the lady: welcome, welcome, thrice welcome to this house, and to me——

She threw herself on one knee to me. Distress had too much humbled her. Sir Charles and I raised her to her seat. You see before you, madam, said she, a strange creature, and looked at her dress: but I hope you will believe I am an innocent one. This vile appearance was not my choice. Fie upon me! I must be thus dressed out for a masquerade: hated diversion! I never had a notion of it. Think not hardly, sir, turning to Sir Charles, her hands clasped and held up, of her whom you have so generously delivered. Think not hardly of me, madam, turning to me: I am not a bad creature. That vile, vile man!—She could say no more.

Charlotte, said my brother, you will make it your first care to raise the spirits of this injured beauty: your next to take her directions, and inform her friends of her safety. Such an admirable young lady as this, cannot be missed an hour, without exciting the fears of all her friends for her. I repeat, madam, that you are in honourable hands. My sister will have pleasure in obliging you.

She wished to be conveyed to town; but looking at her dress, I offered her clothes of mine; and my brother said, if she were very earnest, and thought herself able to go, he would take horse, and leave the chariot, and he was sure that I would attend her thither.

But before she could declare her acceptance of this offer, as she seemed joyfully ready to do, her spirits failed her, and she sunk down at my feet.

Sir Charles just staid to see her come to herself: and then —Sister, said he, the lady cannot be removed. Let Dr. Holmes be sent for instantly. I know you will give her your best attendance. I will be with you before noon to-morrow.

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The lady is too low, and too weak, to be troubled with questions now. Johnson will be back from Windsor. Let him take her commands to any of her friends. Adieu, dear madam—[Your cousin, sir, seemed likely to faint again]—Support yourself. Repeating, You are in safe and honourable hands; bowing to her, as she bowed in return, but spoke not—Adieu, Charlotte: and away went the best of brothers.

And God Almighty bless him, said I, wherever he goes!

Miss Grandison then told me, that the house I was in belonged to the Earl of L———, who had lately married her elder sister: about three months ago, they set out, she said, to pay a visit to my lord's estate and relations in Scotland, for the first time, and to settle some affairs there: they were expected back in a week or fortnight: she came down but last Tuesday, and *that* in order to give directions for everything to be prepared for their reception. It was happy for your cousin, said she, that I obtained the favour of my brother's company; and that he was obliged to be in town this morning. He intended to come back to carry me to town this evening. We are a family of love, Mr. Reeves. We are true brothers and sisters—But why trouble I you with these things now? We shall be better acquainted. I am charmed with Miss Byron.

She was so good as to hurry the breakfast; and when it was over, conducted me up stairs. She bid me stay at the door, and stept gently to the bed-side, and opening the curtain, I heard the voice of our cousin.

Dear madam, what trouble do I give! were her words.

Still talk of trouble, Miss Byron? answered Miss Grandison, with an amiable familiarity; you will not forbear—Will you promise me not to be surprised at the arrival of your cousin Reeves?

I do promise—I shall rejoice to see him.

Miss Grandison called to me. I approached, and catching my cousin's held-out hand; Thank God, thank God, best beloved of a hundred hearts! said I, that once more I behold you! that once more I see you in safe and honourable hands!—I will not tell you what we have all suffered.

No, don't, said she—You need not—But, O my cousin! I have fallen into the company of angels.

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Forbear, gently patting her hand, forbear these high flights, said the kind lady, or I shall beat my charming patient. I shall not think you in a way to be quite well, till you *descend.*

She whispered me, that the doctor had expressed fears for her head, if she were not kept quiet. Then raising her voice, Your cousin's gratitude, Mr. Reeves, is excessive. You must allow me, smiling, to beat her. When she is well, she shall talk of angels, and of what she pleases.

But, my dear Mr. Selby, we who know how her heart overflows with sentiments of gratitude, on every common obligation, and even on but *intentional* ones, can easily account for the high sense she must have of those she lies under for such a deliverance from the brother, and of such kind treatment from the sister, both absolute strangers, till her distresses threw her into their protection.

I will only ask my dear Miss Byron *one* question, said I (forgetting the caution given me below by Miss Grandison), Whether this villain, by his violence—[meant marriage, I was going to say]—But interrupting me, You shall not, Mr. Reeves, said Miss Grandison, smiling, ask half a question, that may revive disagreeable remembrances. Is she not alive, and here, and in a way to be well? Have patience till she is able to tell you all.

My cousin was going to speak: My dear, said the lady, you shall not answer Mr. Reeves's question, if it be a question that will induce you to look backward. At present you must look only forward. And are you not in my care, and in Sir Charles Grandison's protection?

I have done, madam, said I, bowing—The desire of taking vengeance——

Hush, Mr. Reeves!—Surely!—Smiling, and holding her finger to her lip.

It is a patient's duty, said my cousin, to submit to the prescriptions of her kind physician: but were I ever to forgive the author of my distresses, it must be for his being the occasion of bringing me into the knowledge of such a lady: and yet to lie under the weight of obligations that I never can return—Here she stopt.

I took this as a happy indication that the last violence

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was not offered: if it had, she would not have mentioned forgiving the author of her distress.

As to what you say of obligation, Miss Byron, returned Miss Grandison, let *your* heart answer for *mine*, had you and I changed situation. And if, on such a supposition, you can think, that your humanity would have been so extraordinary a matter, then shall you be at liberty, when you are recovered, to say a thousand fine things: till when, pray be silent on this subject.

Then turning to me, See how much afraid your cousin Byron is of lying under obligations. I am afraid she has a proud heart: has she not a *very* proud heart, Mr. Reeves?

She has a very *grateful* one, madam, replied I.

She turned to my cousin: Will you, Miss Byron, be easy under the obligations you talk of, or will you not?

I submit to your superiority, madam, in everything, replied my cousin; bowing her head.

She then asked me, if I had let her friends in the country know of this shocking affair?

I had suspected Mr. Greville, I said, and had written in confidence to her uncle Selby——

Oh my poor grandmamma—Oh my good aunt Selby, and my Lucy—I hope——

Miss Grandison interposed, humorously interrupting—I will have nothing said that begins with *O*. Indeed, Miss Byron, Mr. Reeves, I will not trust you together—Cannot you have patience——

We both asked her pardon. My cousin desired leave to rise—But these odious clothes, said she——

If you are well enough, child, replied Miss Grandison, you shall rise, and have no need to see these odious clothes, as you call them. I told them Mrs. Reeves had sent her some of her clothes. The portmanteau was ordered to be brought up.

Then Miss Grandison, sitting down on the bed by my cousin, took her hand; and, feeling her pulse, Are you sure, my patient, that you shall not suffer if you are permitted to rise? Will you be calm, serene, easy? Will you banish curiosity? Will you endeavour to avoid recollection?

I will do my endeavour, answered my cousin.

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Miss Grandison then rung, and a maid-servant coming up, Jenny, said she, pray give your best assistance to my lovely patient. But be sure don't let her hurry her spirits. I will lead Mr. Reeves into my dressing-room. And when you are dressed, my dear, we will either return to you here, or expect you to join us there at your pleasure.

And then she obligingly conducted me into her dressing-room, and excused herself for refusing to let us talk of interesting subjects. I am rejoiced, said she, to find her more sedate and composed than hitherto she has been. Her head has been greatly in danger. Her talk, for some hours, when she *did* talk, was so wild and incoherent, and she was so full of terror, on every one's coming in her sight, that I would not suffer anybody to attend her but myself.

I left her not, continued Miss Grandison, till eleven; and the housekeeper, and my maid, sat up in her room all the rest of the night.

I arose before my usual time to attend her. I slept not well myself. I did nothing but dream of robbers, rescues, and murders: such an impression had the distresses of this young lady made on my mind.

They made me a poor report, proceeded she, of the night she had passed. And, as I told you, she fainted away this morning, a little before you came, on her endeavouring to give me some account of her affecting story.

Let me tell you, Mr. Reeves, I am as curious as you can be to know the whole of what has befallen her: but her heart is tender and delicate: her spirits are low; and we must not pull down with one hand what we build up with the other: my brother also will expect a good account of my charge.

I blessed her for her goodness. And finding her desirous of knowing all that I could tell her, of our cousin's character, family, and lovers, I gave her a brief history, which extremely pleased her. Good God! said she, what a happiness is it, that such a lady, in such distress, should meet with a man as excellent, and as much admired, as herself! My brother, Mr. Reeves, can never marry but he must break half a score hearts. Forgive me, that I bring *him* in, whenever any good person, or thing, or action, is spoken of. Everybody, I be-

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lieve, who is strongly possessed of a subject, makes everything seen, heard, or read of, that bears the least resemblance, turn into and serve to illustrate that subject.

But here I will conclude this letter, in order to send it by the post. Besides, I have been so much fatigued in body and mind, and my wife has also been so much disturbed in *her* mind, that I must give way to a call of rest.

I will pursue the subject, the now agreeable subject, in the morning; and perhaps shall despatch what I shall farther write, as you must be impatient for it, by an especial messenger.

Sir Rowland was here twice yesterday, and once to-day. My wife caused him to be told, that Miss Byron, by a sudden call, has been obliged to go a little way out of town for two or three days.

He proposes to set out for Caermarthen the beginning of next week. He hoped he should not be denied taking his *corporal* leave of her.

If our cousin has a good day to-morrow, and no return of her fits, she proposes to be in town on Monday. I am to wait on her, and Sir Charles and his sister, at breakfast on Monday morning, and to attend her home; where there will be joy indeed, on her arrival.

Pray receive for yourself, and make for me to your lady, and all friends, my compliments of congratulation.

I have not had either leisure or inclination, to inquire after the villain, who has given us all this disturbance.—Ever, ever yours, ARCHIBALD REEVES.

Saturday Night.

—o—

LETTER XXVII.

From Mr. Reeves to George Selby, Esq.

[In continuation.]

MISS GRANDISON went to my cousin, to see how she bore rising, supposing her near dressed.

She soon returned to me. The most charming woman, I think, said she, I ever saw! but she trembles so, that I have persuaded her to lie down. I answered for you, that you would stay dinner.

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I must beg excuse, madam. I have an excellent wife. She loves Miss Byron as her life: she will be impatient to know——

Well, well, well, say no more, Mr. Reeves: my brother has redeemed one prisoner, and his sister has taken another: and glad you may be that it is no worse.

I bowed, and looked silly, I believe.

You *may* look, and beg and pray, Mr. Reeves. When you know me better, you'll find me a very whimsical creature: but you must stay to see Sir Charles. Would you go home to your wife with half your errand? She won't thank you for that, I can tell you, let her be as good a woman as the best. But, to comfort you, we give not into every modern fashion. We dine earlier than most people of our condition. My brother, though, in the main, above singularity, will, nevertheless, in things he thinks right, be governed by his own rules, which are the laws of reason and convenience. You are on horseback; and, were I you, such good news as I should have to carry, considering what *might* have happened, would give me wings, and make me fly through the air with it.

I was about to speak: Come, come, I will have no denial, interrupted she; I shall have a double pleasure, if you are present when Sir Charles comes, on hearing his account of what happened. You are a good man, and have a *reasonable quantity* of *wonder* and *gratitude*, to heighten a common case into the *marvellous*. So sit down, and be quiet.

I was equally delighted and surprised at her humorous raillery, but could not answer a single word. If it be midnight before you will suffer me to depart, thought I, I will not make another objection.

While this amiable lady was thus entertaining me, we heard the trampling of horses—My brother! said she, I hope!—He comes! pardon the fondness of a sister who speaks from sensible effects—A father and a brother in one!

Sir Charles entered the room. He addressed himself to me in a most polite manner. Mr. Reeves! said he, as I understand from below—Then turning to his sister, Excuse me, Charlotte, I heard this worthy gentleman was with you: and I was impatient to know how my fair guest——

Miss Byron is in a good way, I hope, interrupted she, but

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very weak and low spirited. She arose and dressed; but I have prevailed on her to lie down again.

Then turning to me, with a noble air, he both welcomed and congratulated me.

Sir Charles Grandison is indeed a fine figure. He is in the bloom of youth. I don't know that I have ever seen a handsomer or genteeler man. Well might his sister say, that, if he married, he would break half a score hearts. Oh this vile Pollexfen! thought I, at the moment; could he draw upon, has he hurt, such a man as this?

After pouring out my acknowledgments, in the name of several families, as well as in my own, I could not but inquire into the nature of the hurt he had received.

A very trifle!—My coat only was hurt, Mr. Reeves. The skin of my left shoulder raked a little, putting his hand upon it.

Thank God! said I:—Thank God, said Miss Grandison—But so *near!*—Oh the villain! what might it have been!——

Sir Hargrave, pent up in a chariot, had great disadvantages. My reflections on the event of yesterday yield me the more pleasure, as I have, on inquiry, understood that he will do well again, if he will be ruled. I would not, on any account, have had his instant death to answer for. But no more of this just now. Give me the particulars of the young lady's state of health. I left her in a very bad way.—You had advice?

Miss Grandison gave her brother an account of all that had been done; and of everything that had passed since he went away; as also of the character and excellences of the lady whom he had rescued.

I confirmed what she said in my cousin's favour; and he very gratefully thanked his sister for her care, as a man would do for one the nearest and dearest to him.

We then besought him to give an account of the glorious action, which had restored to all that knew her the darling of our hearts.

I will relate all he said, in the first person, as nearly in his own words as possible, and will try to hit the coolness with which he told the agreeable story.

'You know, sister,' said he, 'the call I had to town. It was 'happy that I yielded to your importunity to attend you hither.

'About two miles on this side Hounslow, I saw a chariot

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'and six driving at a great rate. I also had ordered Jerry 'to drive pretty fast.

'The coachman seemed inclined to dispute the way with 'mine. This occasioned a few moments' stop to both. I 'ordered my coachman to break the way. I don't love to stand 'upon trifles. My horses were fresh: I had not come far.

'The curtain of the chariot we met was pulled down. I 'saw not who was in it; but, on turning out of the way, I 'knew, by the arms, it was Sir Hargrave Pollexfen's.

'There was in it a gentleman, who immediately pulled up the canvas.

'I saw, however, before he drew it up, another person, wrapt up in a man's scarlet cloak.

'For God's sake! help, help! cried out the person: for 'God's sake, help!

'I ordered my coachman to stop.

'Drive on, said the gentleman: cursing his coachman: 'drive on, when I bid you.

'Help! again cried she, but with a voice as if her mouth 'was half stopt.

'I called to my servants on horseback to stop the postillion 'of the other chariot: and I bid Sir Hargrave's coachman 'proceed at his peril.

'Sir Hargrave called out, on the contrary side of the 'chariot (his canvas being still up on that next me), with 'vehement execrations, to drive on.

'I alighted, and went round to the other side of the chariot.

'Again the lady endeavoured to cry out. I saw Sir 'Hargrave struggle to pull over her mouth a handkerchief, 'which was tied round her head. He swore outrageously.

'The moment she beheld me, she spread out both her 'hands——For God's sake——

'Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, said I, by the arms.—You are 'engaged, I doubt, in a very bad affair.

'I *am* Sir Hargrave Pollexfen; and am carrying a fugitive 'wife.—Your *own* wife, Sir Hargrave?——

'Yes, by G—! said he; and she was going to elope from 'me at a damned masquerade.—See! drawing aside the 'cloak, detected in the very dress!

'Oh no! no! no! said the lady——

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'Proceed, coachman, said he, and cursed and swore——

'Let me ask the lady a question, Sir Hargrave.

'You are impertinent, sir. Who the devil are you?

'Are you, madam, Lady Pollexfen? said I.

'Oh no! no! no!—was all she could say——

'Two of my servants came about me; a third held the 'head of the horse on which the postillion sat. Three of Sir 'Hargrave's approached on their horses; but seemed as if 'afraid to come too near, and parleyed together.

'Have an eye to those fellows, said I. Some base work 'is on foot. You'll presently be aided by passengers. Sirrah, 'said I to the coachman (for he lashed the horses on), pro- 'ceed at your peril.

'Sir Hargrave then, with violent curses and threatenings, 'ordered him to drive over every one that opposed him.

'Coachman, proceed at your peril, said I. Madam, will 'you——

'Oh sir, sir, sir, relieve, help me for God's sake! I am in 'a villain's hands! Tricked, vilely tricked, into a villain's 'hands. Help, help, for God's sake!

'Do you, said I to Frederick, cut the traces, if you cannot 'otherwise stop this chariot. Bid Jerry cut the reins, and 'then seize as many of those fellows as you can. Leave Sir 'Hargrave to me.

'The lady continued screaming and crying out for help.

'Sir Hargrave drew his sword, which he had held between 'his knees in the scabbard; and then called upon his servants 'to fire at all that opposed his progress.

'My servants, Sir Hargrave, have fire-arms as well as 'yours. They will not dispute my orders. Don't provoke 'me to give the word.

'Then addressing the lady, Will you, madam, put yourself 'into my protection?

'Oh yes, yes, yes, with my whole heart—Dear good sir, 'protect me!

'I opened the chariot door. Sir Hargrave made a pass at 'me. Take *that*, and be damned to you, for your insolence, 'scoundrel! said he.

'I was aware of this thrust, and put it by; but his sword 'a little raked my shoulder.

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'My sword was in my hand, but undrawn.

'The chariot door remaining open (I was not so cere-
'monious, as to let down the footstep to take the gentleman
'out), I seized him by the collar before he could recover him-
'self from the pass he had made at me; and with a jerk, and a
'kind of twist, laid him under the hind wheel of his chariot.

'I wrenched his sword from him, and snapped it, and
'flung the two pieces over my head.

'His coachman cried out for his master. Mine threatened
'*his* if he stirred. The postillion was a boy. My servant
'had made him dismount, before he joined the other two,
'whom I had ordered aloud to endeavour to seize (but my
'view was only to terrify) wretches, who, knowing the
'badness of their cause, were before terrified.

'Sir Hargrave's mouth and face were very bloody. I
'believe I might hurt him with the pommel of my sword.

'One of his legs, in his sprawling, had got between the
'spokes of his chariot wheel. I thought that was a for-
'tunate circumstance for preventing further mischief; and
'charged his coachman not to stir with the chariot, for his
'master's sake.

'He cried out, cursed, and swore. I believe he was
'bruised with the fall. The jerk was violent. So little
'able to support an offence, Sir Hargrave, upon his own
'principles, should not have been so ready to give it.

'I had not drawn my sword: I hope I never shall be
'provoked to do it in a private quarrel. I should not,
'however, have scrupled to draw it, on such an occasion as
'this, had there been an absolute necessity for it.

'The lady, though greatly terrified, had disengaged her-
'self from the man's cloak. I had not leisure to consider
'her dress; but I was struck with her figure, and more with
'her terror.

'I offered my hand. I thought not now of the footstep,
'any more than I did before: she not of anything, as it
'seemed, but her deliverance.

'Have you not read, Mr. Reeves (Pliny, I think, gives
'the relation), of a frighted bird, that, pursued by a hawk,
'flew for protection into the bosom of a man passing by?

'In like manner, your lovely cousin, the moment I

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'returned to the chariot door, instead of accepting of my 'offered hand, threw herself into my arms.—Oh save me! 'save me!—She was ready to faint. She could not, I 'believe, have stood.

'I carried the lovely creature round Sir Hargrave's horses, 'and seated her in my chariot.—Be assured, madam, said I, 'that you are in honourable hands. I will convey you to 'my sister, who is a young lady of honour and virtue.

'She looked out at one window, then at the other, in 'visible terror, as if fearing still Sir Hargrave. Fear nothing, 'said I: I will attend you in a moment. I shut the chariot 'door.

'I then went backward a few paces (keeping, how-'ever, the lady in my eye), to see what had become of my 'servants.

'It seems, that at their first coming up pretty near with 'Sir Hargrave's horsemen, they presented their pistols.

'What shall we do, Wilkins? or Wilson, or some such 'name, said one of Sir Hargrave's men to another, all three 'of them on their defence. Fly for it, answered the fellow. 'We may swing for this. I see our master down. There 'may be murder.

'Their consciences put them to flight.

'My servants pursued them a little way; but were return-'ing to support their master just as I had put the lady into 'my chariot.

'I saw Sir Hargrave at a distance, on his legs, supported 'by his coachman. He limped; leaned his whole weight 'upon his servant; and seemed to be in agonies.

'I bid one of my servants tell him who I was.

'He cursed me, and threatened vengeance. He cursed 'my servant; and still more outrageously his own scoundrels, 'as he called them.

'I then stept back to my chariot.

'Miss Byron had, through terror, sunk down at the 'bottom of it; where she lay panting, and could only say, 'on my approach, Save me! Save me!

'I reassured her. I lifted her on the seat, and brought 'her to my sister; and what followed, I suppose, Charlotte, 'bowing to her, you have told Mr. Reeves.'

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We were both about to break out in grateful applauses; but Sir Charles, as if designing to hinder us, proceeded:

'You see, Mr. Reeves, what an easy conquest this was. 'You see what a small degree of merit falls to my share. 'The violator's conscience was against him. The con- 'sciences of his fellows were on my side. My own servants 'are honest worthy men. They love their master. In a 'good cause I would set any three of them against six, who 'were engaged in a bad one. Vice is the greatest coward 'in the world, when it knows it will be resolutely opposed. 'And what have good men, engaged in a right cause, to 'fear?'

What an admirable man is Sir Charles Grandison!—Thus thinking! thus acting!

I explained to Sir Charles who this Wilson was, whom the others consulted, and were directed by; and what an implement in this black transaction.

To what other man's protection in the world, Mr. Selby, could our kinswoman have been obliged, and so little mischief followed?

Sir Hargrave, it seems, returned back to town.

What a recreant figure, my dear Mr. Selby, must he make, even to himself!—A villain.

Sir Charles says, that the turnpike men at Smallbury Green told his servants, on their attending him to town after the happy rescue, a formidable story of a robbery committed a little beyond Hounslow by half a dozen villains on horseback, upon a gentleman in a chariot and six; which had passed through that turnpike but half an hour before he was attacked; and that the gentleman, about an hour and half before Sir Charles went through, returned to town, wounded, for advice; and they heard him groan as he passed through the turnpike.

I should add one circumstance, said Sir Charles: Do you know, Charlotte, that you have a rake for your brother?—A man on horseback, it seems, came to the turnpike gate, whilst the turnpike men were telling my servants this story. Nothing in the world, said he, but two young rakes in their chariots and six, one robbing the other of a lady. I and two other passengers, added the man, stood aloof to see the issue

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of the affair. We expected mischief; and some there was. One of the bystanders was the better for the fray; for he took up a silver-hilted sword, broken in two pieces, and rode off with it.

Sir Hargrave, said Sir Charles, smiling, might well give out that he was robbed; to lose such a prize as Miss Byron, and his sword besides.

I asked Sir Charles, if it were not advisable to take measures with the villain?

He thought best, he said, to take as little notice of the affair as possible, unless the aggressor stirred in it. Masquerades, added he, are not creditable places for young ladies to be known to be insulted at them. They are diversions that fall not in with the genius of the English commonalty. Scandal will have something to say from that circumstance, however causeless. But Miss Byron's story, told by herself, will enable you to resolve upon your future measures.

So, Sir Charles seems not to be a friend to masquerades.

I think, were I to live a hundred years, I never would go to another. Had it not been for Lady Betty—She has, indeed, too gay a turn for a woman of forty, and a mother of children. Miss Byron, I daresay, will be afraid of giving the lead to her for the future. But, excepting my wife and self, nobody in town has suffered more than Lady Betty on this occasion. Indeed she is, I must say, an obliging, well-meaning woman: and she also declares (so much has she been affected with Miss Byron's danger, of which she takes herself to be the innocent cause), that she will never again go to a masquerade.

I long to have Miss Byron's account of this horrid affair. —God grant that it may not be such a one as will lay us under a necessity—But as our cousin has a great notion of female delicacy—I know not what I would say—We must have patience a little while longer.

Miss Grandison's eyes shone with pleasure all the time her brother was giving his relation.

I can only say, my brother, said she, when he had done, that you have rescued an angel of a woman; and you have made me as happy by it as yourself.

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I have a generous sister, Mr. Reeves, said Sir Charles.

Till I knew my brother, Mr. Reeves, as I now know him, I was an inconsiderate, unreflecting girl. Good and evil, which immediately affected not myself, were almost alike indifferent to me. But he has awakened in me a capacity to enjoy the true pleasure that arises from a benevolent action.

Depreciate not, my Charlotte, your own worth. Absence, Mr. Reeves, endears. I have been long abroad: not much above a year returned: but, when you know us better, you will find I have a partial sister.

Mr. Reeves will not then think me so. But I will go and see how my fair patient does.

She went accordingly to my cousin.

O Sir Charles, said I, what an admirable woman is Miss Grandison!

My sister Charlotte, Mr. Reeves, is, indeed, an excellent woman. I think myself happy in her: but I tell her sometimes, that I have still a *more* excellent sister: and it is no small instance of Charlotte's greatness of mind, that she herself will allow me to say so.

Just then came in the ladies: the two charming creatures entered together, Miss Grandison supporting my trembling cousin. But she had first acquainted her, that she would find Sir Charles in *her* dressing-room.

She looked indeed lovely, though wan, at her first entrance; but a fine glow overspread her cheeks, at the sight of her deliverer.

Sir Charles approached her, with an air of calmness and serenity, for fear of giving her emotion. She cast her eyes upon him, with a look of the most respectful gratitude.

I will not oppress my fair guest with many words: but permit me to congratulate you, as I hope I may, on your recovered spirits—Allow me, madam——

And he took her almost motionless hand, and conducted her to an easy chair that had been set for her. She sat down, and would have said something; but only bowed to Sir Charles, to Miss Grandison, and me; and reclined her head against the cheek of the chair.

Miss Grandison held her salts to her.

She took them into her own hands, and smelling to them,

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raised her head a little: forgive me, madam! Pardon me, sir! Oh my cousin, to me—How can I—So oppressed with obligations!—Such goodness!—No words!—My gratitude! —My full heart!——

And then she again reclined her head, as giving up hopelessly the effort she made to express her gratitude.

You must not, madam, said Sir Charles, sitting down by her, overrate a common benefit.—Dear Miss Byron (permit me to address myself to you, as of long acquaintance), by what Mr. Reeves has told my sister, and both have told me, I must think yesterday one of the happiest days of my life. I am sorry that our acquaintance has begun so much at your cost: but you must let us turn this evil appearance into real good. I have two sisters: the world produces not more worthy women. Let me henceforth boast that I have three: and shall I not then have reason to rejoice in the event that has made so lovely an addition to my family?

Then taking her passive hand with the tenderness of a truly affectionate brother, consoling a sister in calamity, and taking his sister's, and joining both, Shall I not, madam, present my Charlotte to a sister? And will you not permit me to claim as a brother under that relation?—Our Miss Byron's christian name, Mr. Reeves?

Harriet, sir.

My sister Harriet, receive and acknowledge your Charlotte. My Charlotte——

Miss Grandison arose, and saluted my cousin; who looked at Sir Charles with reverence, as well as gratitude; at Miss Grandison with delight; and at me with eyes lifted up: and after a little struggle for speech, How shall I bear this goodness! said she—This, indeed, is bringing good out of evil!—Did I not say, my cousin, that I was fallen into the company of angels?

I was afraid she would have fainted.

We must endeavour, Mr. Reeves, said Sir Charles to me, to lessen the sense *our* Miss Byron has of her past danger, in order to bring down to reasonable limits the notion she has of her obligation for a common relief.

Miss Grandison ordered a few drops on sugar—You must be orderly, my sister Harriet, said she. Am I not your

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elder sister? *My* elder sister makes me do what she pleases.

O madam! said my cousin——

Call me not *madam;* call me *your Charlotte.* My brother has given me and himself a sister—Will you not own me?

How can a heart bowed down by obligation, and goodness never to be returned, rise to that lovely familiarity, by which the obligers so generously distinguish themselves? My lips and my heart, I will be so bold as to say, ever went together: but how—And yet so sweetly invited. My—my—my Charlotte (withdrawing her hand from Sir Charles, and clasping both her arms round Miss Grandison's neck, the two worthiest bosoms of the sex joining as one), take your Harriet, person and mind—May I be found worthy, on proof, of all this goodness!

Lady Betty has just left us. I read to her what I have written since my visit to Colnebrook. She shall not, she says, recover her eyes for a week to come.

The women, Mr. Selby, are ever looking forward on certain occasions. Lady Betty and my wife extended their wishes so far, as that they might be able to call Miss Grandison and our Miss Byron sisters; but by a claim that should exclude Sir Charles as a brother to one of them.

Should Sir Charles—But no more on this subject—Yet one word more: when the ladies had mentioned it, I could not help thinking that this graceful and truly fine gentleman seems to be the only man, whom our cousin has yet seen, that would meet with no great difficulty from her on such an application.

But Sir Charles has a great estate, and still greater expectations from my Lord W——. His sister says, he would break half a score hearts, were he to marry—So, for that matter, would our Miss Byron. But once more—Not another word, however, on this subject.

I stayed to dine with this amiable brother and sister. My cousin exerted herself to go down, and sat at table for one half hour: but changing countenance, once or twice, as she sat, Miss Grandison would attend her up, and make her lie down. I took leave of her, at her quitting the table.

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On Monday I hope to see her once more among us.

If our dear Miss Byron cannot write, you will perhaps have one letter more, my dear Mr. Selby, from your ever-affectionate ARCHIBALD REEVES.

My servant is this moment returned with your letter. Indeed, my dear Mr. Selby, there are two or three passages in it, that would have cut me to the heart* had not the dear creature been so happily restored to our hopes.

LETTER XXVIII.

Mr. Reeves.—In continuation.

Monday Night, Feb. 20.

I WILL write one more letter, my dear cousin Selby, and then I will give up my pen to our beloved cousin.

I got to Colnebrook by nine this morning. I had the pleasure to find our Miss Byron recovered beyond my hopes. She had a very good night on Saturday; and all Sunday, she said, was a cordial day to her from morning till night; and her night was quiet and happy.

Miss Grandison stayed at home yesterday to keep my cousin company. Sir Charles passed the greatest part of the day in the library. The two ladies were hardly ever separated. My cousin expresses herself in raptures, whenever she speaks of this brother and sister. Miss Grandison, she says (and indeed every one must see it), is one of the frankest and most communicative of women. Sir Charles appears to be one of the most unreserved of men, as well as one of the most polite. He makes not his guests uneasy with his civilities: but you see freedom and ease in his whole deportment; and the stranger cannot doubt but Sir Charles will be equally pleased with freedom and ease, in return. I had an encouraging proof of the justness of this observation this morning from him, as we sat at breakfast. I had expressed myself, occasionally, in such a manner, as showed more respect than freedom: My dear Mr. Reeves, said he,

* See Letter XXIV. p. 142.

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kindred minds will be intimate at first sight. Receive me early into the list of your friends; I have already numbered you among mine. I should think amiss of myself, if so good a man as I am assured Mr. Reeves is, should, by his distance, shew a diffidence of me, that would not permit his mind to mingle with mine.

Miss Grandison, my cousin says, put her on relating to her, her whole history; and the histories of the several persons and families to whom she is related.

Miss Byron concluding, as well as I, that Sir Charles would rather take his place in the coach, than go on horseback to town; and being so happily recovered, as not to give us apprehension about her bearing tolerably the little journey; I kept my horse in our return, and Sir Charles went in the coach. This motion coming from Miss Byron, I rallied her upon it when I got her home: but she won't forgive me, if she knows that I told you whose the motion was. And yet the dear creature's eyes sparkled with pleasure when she had carried her point.

I was at home near half an hour before the coach arrived; and was a welcome guest.

My dear Mrs. Reeves told me, she had expected our arrival before dinner, and hoped Sir Charles and his sister would dine with us. I hoped so too, I told her.

I found there Lady Betty and Miss Clements, a favourite of us all, both impatiently waiting to see my cousin.

Don't be jealous, Mr. Reeves, said my wife, if after what I have heard of Sir Charles Grandison, and what he has done for us, I run to him with open arms.

I give you leave, my dear, to love him, replied I; and to express your love in what manner you please.

I have no doubt, said Lady Betty, that I shall break my heart, if Sir Charles takes not very particular notice of me.

He shall have my prayers, as well as my praises, said Miss Clements.

She is acquainted with the whole shocking affair.

When the coach stopt, and the bell rung, the servants contended who should first run to the door. I welcomed them at the coach. Sir Charles handed out Miss Byron;

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I, Miss Grandison: Sally, said my cousin, to her raptured maid, take care of Mrs. Jenny.

Sir Charles was received by Mrs. Reeves, as I expected. She was almost speechless with joy. He saluted her: but I think, as I tell her, the first motion was hers. He was then obliged to go round; and my cousin, I do assure you, looked as if she would not wish to have been neglected.

As soon as the ladies could speak, they poured out their blessings and thanks to him, and to Miss Grandison; whom, with a most engaging air, he presented to each lady; and she, as engagingly, saluted her sister Harriet by that tender relation, and congratulated them, and Miss Byron, and herself, upon it; kindly bespeaking a family relation for herself through her dear Miss Byron, were her words.

When we were seated, my wife and Lady Betty wanted to enter into the particulars of the happy deliverance, in praise of the deliverer; but Sir Charles interrupting them, My dear Mrs. Reeves, said he, you cannot be too careful of this jewel. Everything may be trusted to her own discretion; but how can we well blame the man who would turn thief for so rich a treasure? I do assure you, my sister Harriet [Do you know, Mrs. Reeves, that I have found my third sister? Was she not stolen from us in her cradle?], that if Sir Hargrave will repent, I will forgive him for the sake of the temptation.

Mrs. Reeves was pleased with this address, and has talked of it since.

I never can forgive him, sir, said Miss Byron, were it but——

That he has laid you under such an obligation, said Miss Grandison, patting her hand with her fan, as she sat over against her: but hush, child! You said that before!—And then turning to Mrs. Reeves, Has not our new-found sister a very proud heart, Mrs. Reeves?

And, dearest Miss Grandison, replied my smiling, delighted cousin, did you not ask that question before?

I did, child, I did; but not of Mrs. Reeves.—A compromise, however—Do you talk no more of *obligation*, and I'll talk no more of *pride*.

Charlotte justly chides her Harriet, said Sir Charles.

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What must the man have been that had declined his aid in a distress so alarming? Not one word more, therefore, upon this subject.

We were all disappointed, that this amiable brother and sister excused themselves from dining with us. All I mean of our own family; for Lady Betty and Miss Clements, not being able to stay, were glad *they* did not.

They took leave, amidst a thousand grateful blessings and acknowledgments: Miss Grandison promising to see her sister Harriet very soon again; and kindly renewing her wishes of intimacy.

When they went away, There goes your heart, Miss Byron, said Mrs. Reeves.

True, answered Miss Byron, if my heart have no place in it for anything but gratitude, as I believe it has not.

Miss Grandison, added she, is the most agreeable of women——

And Sir Charles, rejoined Mrs. Reeves archly, is the most *dis*agreeable of men.

Forbear, cousin, replied Miss Byron, and blushed.

Well, well, said Lady Betty, you need not, my dear, be ashamed, if it be so.

Indeed you need not, joined in Miss Clements: I never saw a finer man in my life. Such a lover, if one *might* have him——

If, if—replied Miss Byron—But till *if* is out of the question, should there not be such a thing as discretion, Miss Clements?

No doubt of it, returned that young lady; and if it *be* to be shewn by any woman on earth, where there is such a man as this in the question, and in such circumstances, it must be by Mrs. Byron.

Miss Byron was not so thoroughly recovered, but that her spirits began to flag. We made her retire, and, at her request, excused her coming down to dinner.

I told you I had accepted of the offer made by Lady Betty, when we were in dreadful uncertainty, that her steward should make further inquiries about the people at Paddington. Nothing worth mentioning has occurred from those inquiries; except confirming, that the widow and her daughters are not

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people of bad characters. In all likelihood they thought they should entitle themselves to the thanks of all Miss Byron's friends, when the marriage was completed with a man of Sir Hargrave's fortune.

The messenger that I sent to inquire after that Bagenhall's character, has informed us, that it is a very profligate one; and that he is an intimate of Sir Hargrave: but no more is necessary now, God be praised, to be said of him.

The vile wretch himself, I hear, keeps his room; and it is whispered, that he is more than half crazed; insomuch, that his very attendants are afraid to go near him. We know not the nature of his hurt; but hurt he is, though in a fair way of recovery. He threatens, it seems, destruction to Sir Charles, the moment he is able to go abroad. God preserve one of the worthiest and best of men!

Sir Hargrave has turned off all the servants, we are told, that attended him on his shocking, but happily disappointed, enterprise.

Miss Byron intends to write to her Lucy, by to-morrow's post (if she continued mending), an ample account of all that she suffered from the date of her last letter, to the hour of her happy deliverance. I am to give her minutes, to the best of my recollection, of what I have written to you; that so the account may be as complete as possible, and that she may write no more than is consistent with the series, which she is required to preserve. She begins this evening, she bids me tell you, that you may be as little a while in suspense about her as possible: but if she cannot finish by to-morrow night, she will have an opportunity to despatch her letter on Wednesday by a servant of Mr. Greville's, whom he left in town with some commissions, and who promises to call for anything we may have to send to Selby House.

Sir Rowland—But let my cousin write to you upon that and other matters. She knows what to say on that subject better than I do.

Meantime I heartily congratulate every one of the dear family upon the return and safety of the darling of so many hearts; and remain, dear Mr. Selby, your most faithful and obedient servant, ARCHIBALD REEVES.

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LETTER XXIX.

Miss Byron to Miss Selby.

Monday, Feb. 20.

Is it again given me to write to you, my Lucy! and in you, to all my revered friends! to write with cheerfulness! to call upon you all to rejoice with me!—God be praised!

What dangers have I escaped! How have my head and my heart been affected; I dare not, as yet, think of the anguish you all endured for me.

With what wretched levity did I conclude my last letter! Giddy creature, that I was, vain and foolish!

But let me begin my sad story. Your impatience all this while must be too painful. Only let me premise, that gaily as I boasted, when I wrote to you so conceitedly, as it might seem, of my dress, and of conquest, and I know not what nonsense, I took no pleasure at the place, in the shoals of fools that swam after me. I despise myself and them. *Despised!* I was shocked at both.

Two Lucifers were among them; but the worst, the very worst Lucifer of all, appeared in a harlequin dress. He hopped, and skipt, and played the fool about me; and at last told me, he knew Miss Byron; and that he was, as he called himself, the despised, the rejected, Sir Hargrave Pollexfen.

He behaved, however, with complaisance; and I had no apprehension of what I was to suffer from his villany.

Mr. Reeves has told you, that he saw me into the chair, provided for me by my vile new servant. Oh, my Lucy! one branch of my vanity is entirely lopt off. I must pretend to some sort of skill in physiognomy! Never more will I, for this fellow's sake, presume to depend on my judgment of people's hearts framed from their countenances.

Mr. Reeves has told you everything about the chair, and the chairmen. How can I describe the misgivings of my heart when I first began to suspect treachery! But when I undrew the curtains, and found myself farther deluded by another false heart, whose help I implored, and in the midst of fields, and soon after the lights put out, I pierced the night air with my screams, till I could scream no more. I was taken

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out in fits; and when I came a little to my senses, I found myself on a bed, three women about me; one at my head, holding a bottle to my nose, my nostrils sore with hartshorn, and a strong smell of burnt feathers; but no man near me.

Where am I? Who are you, madam? And who are you? Where am I? were the questions I first asked.

The women were a mother and two daughters. The mother answered, You are not in bad hands.

God grant you say truth! said I.

No harm is intended you; only to make you one of the happiest of women. We would not be concerned in a bad action.

I hope not: I hope not: let me engage your pity, madam. You seem to be a mother: these young gentlewomen, I presume, are your daughters. Save me from ruin, I beseech you, madam: save me from ruin, as you would your daughters.

These young women *are* my daughters. They are sober and modest women. No ruin is intended you. One of the richest and noblest men in England is your admirer: he dies for you: he assures me, that he intends honourable marriage to you. You are not engaged, he says: and you must, and you shall be his. You may save murder, madam, if you consent. He resolves to be the death of any lover whom you encourage.

This must be the vile contrivance of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, immediately cried I out: is it not? Is it not? Tell me, I *beg* of you tell me.

I arose, and sat on the bedside; and at that moment in came the vile, vile Sir Hargrave.

I screamed out. He threw himself at my feet. I reclined my head on the bosom of the elderly person, and by hartshorn and water they had much ado to keep me out of a fit. Had he not withdrawn; had he kept in my sight; I should certainly have fainted. But holding up my head, and seeing only the women, I revived: and began to pray, to beg, to offer rewards, if they would facilitate my escape, or procure my safety: but then came in again the hated man.

I beg of you, Miss Byron, said he, with an air of greater haughtiness than before, to make yourself easy, and hear what I have to say. It is in your own choice, in your own power, to be what you please, and to make *me* what you please.

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Do not therefore needlessly terrify yourself. You see I am a determined man. Ladies, you may withdraw——

Not and leave me here!—And as they went out, I pushed by the mother, and between the daughters, and followed the foremost into the parlour; and then sunk down on my knees, wrapping my arms about her: Oh save me! save me! said I.

The vile wretch entered. I left her, and kneeled to him. I knew not what I did. I remember, I said, wringing my hands, If you have mercy; if you have compassion; let me now, now, I beseech you, sir, this moment, experience your mercy.

He gave them some motion, I suppose, to withdraw (for by that time the widow and the other daughter were in the parlour); and they all three retired.

I have besought *you*, madam, and on my *knees* too, to show *me* mercy: but none would you show me, inexorable Miss Byron! Kneel, if you will; in your turn kneel, supplicate, pray; you cannot be more in earnest than I was. Now are the tables turned.

Barbarous man! said I, rising from my knees. My spirit was raised: but it as instantly subsided. I beseech you, Sir Hargrave, in a quite frantic way, wringing my hands, and coming near him, and then running to the window, and then to the door (without meaning to go out at either, had they been open; for whither could I go?) and then again to him; Be not, I beseech you, Sir Hargrave, cruel to me. I never was cruel to anybody. You know I was civil to you; I was *very* civil——

Yes, yes, and very determined. You called me no names. I call you none, Miss Byron. You were very civil. Hitherto *I* have not been uncivil. But remember, madam—But, sweet and ever adorable creature, and he clasped his arms about me, your very terror is beautiful! I can *enjoy* your terror, madam—and the savage would have kissed me. My averted head frustrated his intention; and at his feet I besought him not to treat the poor creature, whom he had so vilely betrayed, with indignity.

I don't hit your fancy, madam!

Can you be a malicious man, Sir Hargrave?

You don't like my morals, madam!

And is this the way, Sir Hargrave, are these the means you take, to convince me that I ought to like them?

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Well, madam, you shall prove the mercy in me, you would not show. You shall see that I cannot be a malicious man; a revengeful man: and yet you have raised my pride. You shall find me a *moral* man.

Then, Sir Hargrave, will I bless you from the bottom of my heart!

But you know what will justify me, in every eye, for the steps I have taken. Be mine, madam: be legally mine. I offer you my honest hand. Consent to be Lady Pollexfen —No punishment, I hope—or, take the consequence.

What, sir! justify by so poor, so very poor, a compliance, steps that you have so basely taken!—Take my life, sir: but my hand and my heart are my own: they never shall be separated.

I arose from my knees, trembling, and threw myself upon the window-seat, and wept bitterly.

He came to me. I looked on this side, and on that, wishing to avoid him.

You cannot fly, madam. You are securely mine: and mine still more securely you shall be. Don't provoke me: don't make me desperate. By all that's good and holy——

He cast his eyes at my feet: then at my face; then threw himself at my feet, and embraced my knees with his odious arms.

I was terrified. I screamed. In ran one of the daughters —Good sir; Pray, sir!—Did you not say you would be honourable?

Her mother followed her in—Sir, sir! In my house——

Thank God, thought I, the people here are better than I had reason to apprehend they were. But, oh, my Lucy! they seemed to believe, that marriage would make amends for every outrage.

Here let me conclude this letter. I have a great deal more to say.

—o—

LETTER XXX.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

WHAT a plague, said the wretch to the women, do you come in for? I thought you knew your own sex better than to mind a woman's squalling. They are always ready, said

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the odious fellow, to put us in mind of the occasion we ought to give them for crying out. I have not offered the least rudeness.

I hope not, sir. I hope my house—So sweet a creature——

Dear blessed, blessed woman (frantic with terror, and mingled joy, to find myself in better hands than I expected —Standing up, and then sitting down, I believe at every sentence), protect me! Save me! Be my advocate! Indeed I have not deserved this treacherous treatment. Indeed I am a good sort of body (I scarce knew what I said): all my friends love me: they will break their hearts, if any mishap befall me: they are all good people: you would love them dearly if you knew them: Sir Hargrave may have better and richer wives than I: pray prevail upon him to spare me to my friends, for *their* sake. I will forgive him for all he has done.

Nay, dear lady, if Sir Hargrave will make you his lawful and true wife, there can be no harm done, surely.

I will, I will, Mrs. Awberry, said he. I have promised, and I will perform. But if she stand in her own light—She expects nothing from my *morals*—If she stand in her own light; and looked fiercely——

God protect me! said I; God protect me!

The gentleman is without, sir, said the woman. Oh how my heart, at that moment, seemed to be at my throat! What gentleman, thought I! Some one come to save me! —Oh no!——

And instantly entered the most horrible looking clergyman that I ever beheld.

This, as near as I can recollect, is his description: A vast tall, big-boned, splayfooted man. A shabby gown; as shabby a wig; a huge red pimply face; and a nose that hid half of it when he looked on one side, and he seldom looked fore-right when I saw him. He had a dog's-eared common-prayer book in his hand, which once had been gilt; opened, horrid sight! at the page of matrimony!

Yet I was so intent upon making a friend, when a man, a clergyman appeared, that I heeded not, at his entrance, his frightful visage, as I did afterwards. I pushed by Sir Hargrave, turning him half round with my vehemence, and

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made Mrs. Awberry totter; and, throwing myself at the clergyman's feet, Man of God, said I, my hands clasped, and held up; man of God! Gentleman! Worthy man!—A good clergyman must be all this!—If ever you had children! save a poor creature! basely tricked away from all her friends! innocent! thinking of no harm to anybody! I would not hurt a worm! I love everybody!—Save me from violence! Give not your aid to sanctify a base action.

The man snuffled his answer through his nose. When he opened his pouched mouth, the tobacco hung about his great yellow teeth. He squinted upon me, and took my clasped hands, which were buried in his huge hand: Rise, madam: kneel not to me! no harm is intended you. One question only: Who is that gentleman before me, in the silver-laced clothes? What is his name?——

He is Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, sir: a wicked, a very wicked man, for all he looks so!

The vile wretch stood smiling, and enjoying my distress.

O madam! a very hon-our-able-man, bowing, like a sycophant, to Sir Hargrave.

And who, pray, madam, are you? What is your name?

Harriet Byron, sir! A poor innocent creature (looking at my dress), though I make such a vile appearance—Good sir, your pity! and I sunk down again at his feet.—

Of Northamptonshire, madam? You are a single woman! Your uncle's name——

Is Selby, sir. A very good man—I will reward you, sir, as the most grateful heart——

All is fair, all is aboveboard: all is as it was represented. I am above bribes, madam. You will be the happiest of women before daybreak—*Good people!*—The three women advanced.

Then I saw what an ugly wretch he was!

Sir Hargrave advanced. The two horrid creatures raised me between them. Sir Hargrave took my struggling hand; and then I saw another ill-looking man enter the room, who, I suppose, was to give me to the hated man.

Dearly beloved, began to read the snuffling monster——

Oh, my Lucy! does not your heart ache for your Harriet?

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Mine has seemed to turn over and over, round and round, I don't know how, at the recital.—It was ready to choke me at the time.

I must break off for a few minutes.

LETTER XXXI.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

I was again like one frantic. Read no more! said I; and, in my frenzy, dashed the book out of the minister's hand, if a minister he was. I beg your pardon, sir, said I; but you must read no further. I am basely betrayed hither. I cannot, I will not, be his.

Proceed, proceed, said Sir Hargrave, taking my hand by force; virago as she is, I will own her for my wife.—Are you the *gentle*, the *civil* Miss Byron, madam? looking sneeringly in my face.

Alas! my Lucy, I was no virago: I was in a perfect frenzy; but it was not an unhappy frenzy; since, in all probability, it kept me from falling into fits; and fits, the villain had said, should not save me.

Dearly beloved, again snuffled the wretch. Oh, my Lucy: I shall never love these words. How many odious circumstances invert the force of the kindest words! Sir Hargrave still detained my struggling hand.

I stamped, and threw myself to the length of my arm, as he held my hand. *No dearly beloveds*, said I. I was just beside myself. What to say, what to do, I knew not.

The cruel wretch laughed at me: *No dearly beloveds!* repeated he. Very comical, 'faith, and laughed again: But proceed, proceed, doctor.

We are gathered together here in the sight of God, read he on.

This affected me still more. I adjure you, sir, to the minister, by that God in whose sight you read we are gathered together, that you proceed no further. I adjure you, Sir Hargrave, in the same tremendous name, that you stop further proceedings. My life take: with all my heart, take my life: but my hand never, never, will I join with yours.

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Proceed, doctor: Doctor, pray proceed, said the vile Sir Hargrave. When the day dawns, she will be glad to own her marriage.

Proceed at your peril, sir, said I. If you are really and truly a minister of that God whose presence what you have read supposes, do *not* proceed: do not make me desperate.—Madam, turning to the widow, you are a mother, and have given me room to hope you are a good woman; look upon me as if I were one of those daughters whom I see before me: Could you see one of them thus treated? Dear young women, turning to each, can you unconcernedly look on, and see a poor creature tricked, betrayed, and thus violently, basely treated, and not make my case your own? Speak for me! Plead for me! Be my advocates! Each of you, if ye are women, plead for me, as you would yourselves wish to be pleaded for, in my circumstances, and were thus barbarously used!

The young women wept. The mother was moved.

I wonder I kept my head. My brain was on fire. Still, still, the unmoved Sir Hargrave cried out, Proceed, proceed, doctor: to-morrow, before noon, all will be as it should be.

The man who stood aloof (the slyest, sodden-faced creature I ever saw) came nearer—To the question, doctor, and to my part, if you please!—Am not I her father?—To the question, doctor, if you please!—The gentlewomen will prepare her for what is to follow.

Oh, thou *man!* of heart the most obdurate and vile! And will ye, looking at every person, one hand held up (for still the vile man griped the other quite benumbed hand in his iron paw), and adjuring each, will ye see this violence done to a poor young creature?—A soul, gentlewomen, you may have to answer for. I *can* die. Never, never, will I be his.

Let us women talk to the lady by ourselves, Sir Hargrave. Pray, your honour, let us talk to her by ourselves.

Ay, ay, ay, said the parson, by all means: let the ladies talk to one another, sir. She may be brought to consider.

He let go my hand. The widow took it; and was leading me out of the room—Not up stairs, I hope, madam, said I.

You shan't then, said she. Come, Sally; come, Deb; let us women go out together.

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They led me into a little room adjoining to the parlour: and then, my spirits subsiding, I thought I should have fainted away. I had more hartshorn and water poured down my throat.

When they had brought me a little to myself, they pleaded with me Sir Hargrave's great estate.—What are riches to me? Dirt, dirt, dirt! I hate them. They cannot purchase peace of mind; I want not riches.

They pleaded his honourable love—I my invincible aversion.

He was a handsome man—The most odious in my eyes of the human species. Never, never should my consent be had to sanctify such a baseness.

My danger! and that they should not be able to save me from worse treatment——

How!—*Not able!*—Ladies, madam, is not this your own house? Cannot you raise a neighbourhood? Have you no neighbours? A thousand pounds will I order to be paid into your hands for a present before the week is out; I pledge my honour for the payment; if you will but save me from a violence, that no worthy woman can see offered to a distressed young creature!—A thousand pounds!—dear ladies!—only to save me, and see me safe to my friends!

The wretches in the next room, no doubt, heard all that passed. In at that moment came Sir Hargrave: Mrs. Awberry, said he, with a visage swelled with malice, young ladies, we keep you up; we disturb you. Pray retire to your own rest: leave me to talk with this perverse woman. She is mine.

Pray, Sir Hargrave, said Mrs. Awberry——

Leave her to *me*, I say:—Miss Byron, you *shall* be mine. Your Grevilles, madam, your Fenwicks, your Ormes, when they know the pains and the expense I have been at, to secure you, shall confess me their superior—Shall confess——

In wickedness, in cruelty, sir, you are every man's superior.

You talk of cruelty, Miss Byron! triumphing over scores of prostrate lovers, madam! You remember your treatment of me, madam! kneeling, like an abject wretch at your feet! Kneeling for pity! But no pity could touch your heart, madam!—Ungrateful, proud girl!—Yet I am not humbling

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you: take notice of that: I am not humbling you: I am proposing to exalt you, madam.

Vile, vile debasement! said I.

To exalt Miss Byron into Lady Pollexfen. And yet if you hold not out your hand to me——

He would have snatched my hand. I put it behind me. He would have snatched the other: I put that behind me too: and the vile wretch would then have kissed my undefended neck: but, with both my hands, I pushed his audacious forehead from me. Charming creature! he called me, with passion in his look and accent: then, cruel, proud, ungrateful: and swore by his Maker, that if I would not give my hand instantly, instead of *exalting* me, he would *humble* me. Ladies, pray withdraw, said he, leave her to me: Either Lady Pollexfen, or what I please: rearing himself proudly up! She may be happy if she will. Leave her to me.

Pray, sir, said the youngest of the two daughters; and wept for me.

Greatly hurt, indeed, to be the wife of a man of my fortune and consequence! But leave her to me, I say.—I will soon bring down her pride: What a devil, am I to creep, beg, pray, entreat, and only for a *wife?* But, madam, said the insolent wretch, you will be mine upon easier terms, perhaps.

Madam, *pray*, madam, said the widow to me, consider what you are about, and whom you refuse. Can you have a handsomer man? Can you have a man of greater fortune? Sir Hargrave means nothing but what is honourable. You are in his power——

In *his* power, madam! returned I: I am in *yours*. You are mistress of this house. I claim the protection of it. Have you not neighbours? *Your* protection I put myself under. Then clasping my arms about her, lock me from him till you can have help to secure to you the privilege of your own house; and deliver me safe to my friends, and I will share my fortune with your two daughters.

The wicked man took the mother and youngest daughter each by her hand, after he had disengaged the former from my clasping arms, and led them to the door. The elder

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followed them of her own accord. They none of them struggled against going. I begged, prayed, besought them not to go, and, when they did, would have thrust myself out with them: but the wretch, in shutting them out, squeezed me dreadfully, as I was half in, half out; and my nose gushed out with blood.

I screamed: he seemed frightened: but instantly recovering myself—So, so, you have done your worst!—You have killed me, I hope. I was out of breath; my stomach was very much pressed, and one of my arms was bruised. I have the marks still; for he clapt to the door with violence, not knowing, to do him justice, that I was so forward in the door-way.

I was in dreadful pain. I talked half wildly, I remember. I threw myself in a chair. So, so, you have killed me, I hope—Well, now I hope, now I hope, you are satisfied. Now may you moan over the poor creature you have destroyed: for he expressed great tenderness and consternation; and I, for my part, felt such pains in my bosom, that, having never felt such before, I really thought I was bruised to death: Repeating my foolish so, so.—But I forgive you, said I—Only, sir, call to the gentlewomen, sir.—Retire, sir. Let me have my own sex only about me. My head swam; my eyes failed me; and I fainted quite away.

—o—

LETTER XXXII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

I UNDERSTOOD afterwards that he was in the most dreadful consternation. He had fastened the door upon me and himself; and, for a few moments, was not enough present to himself to open it. Yet crying out upon his God to have mercy upon him, and running about the room, the women hastily rapped at the door. Then he ran to it, opened it, cursed himself, and besought them to recover me, if possible.

They said I had death in my face: they lamented over me: my nose had done bleeding: but, careful of his own safety in the midst of his terror, he took my bloody handkerchief; if I did not recover, he said, *that* should not appear

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against him; and he hastened into the next room, and thrust it into the fire; by which were sitting, it seems, the minister and his helper, over some burnt brandy.

O gentlemen! cried the wretch, nothing can be done to-night. Take this; and gave them money. The lady is in a fit. I wish you well home.

The younger daughter reported this to me afterwards, and what follows: They had desired the maid, it seems, to bring them more firing, and a jug of ale; and they would sit in the chimney corner, they said, till peep of day: but the same young woman, who has taken off from her errand, to assist me, finding me, as they all thought, not likely to recover, ran in to them, and declared, that the lady was dead, certainly dead; and what, said she, will become of us all? This terrified the two men. They said, it was then time for them to be gone. Accordingly, taking each of them another dram, they snatched up their hats and sticks, and away they hurried; hoping, the doctor said, that, as they were innocent, and only meant to serve the gentleman, their names, whatever happened, would not be called in question.

When I came a little to myself, I found the three women only with me. I was in a cold sweat, all over shivering. There was no fire in that room: they led me into the parlour, which the two men had quitted, and sat me down in an elbow chair; for I could hardly stand, or support myself; and chafed my temples with Hungary-water.

Wretched creatures, men of this cast, my Lucy, thus to sport with the healths and happiness of poor creatures whom they pretend to love! I am afraid I never shall be what I was. At times I am very sensible at my stomach of this violent squeeze.

The mother and elder sister left me soon after, and went to Sir Hargrave. I can only guess at the result of their deliberations by what followed.

The younger sister, with compassionate frankness, answered all my questions, and let me know all the above particulars. Yet she wondered that I could refuse so handsome and so rich a man as Sir Hargrave.

She boasted much of their reputation. Her mother would not do an ill thing, she said, for the world: and she had a

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brother who had a place in the custom-house, and was as honest a man, though she said it, as any in it. She owned that she knew my new vile servant; and praised his fidelity to the masters he had served, in such high terms, as if she thought all duties were comprised in that one, of obeying his principals, right or wrong. Mr. Williams, she said, was a pretty man, a genteel man, and she believed he was worth money; and she was sure would make an excellent husband. I soon found that the simple girl was in love with this vile, this specious fellow. She could not bear to hear me hint anything in his disfavour, as, by way of warning to her, I would have done. But she was sure Mr. William was a downright honest man; and that, if he were guilty of any bad thing, it was by command of those to whom he owed duty: and *they* are to be answerable for that, you know, madam.

We were broke in upon, as I was intending to ask more questions (for I find this Wilson was the prime agent in all this mischief), when the elder sister called out the younger: and instantly came in Sir Hargrave.

He took a chair, and sat down by me, one leg thrown over the knee of the other; his elbow upon that knee, and his hands supporting his bowed down head; biting his lips; looking at me, then from me, then at me again, five or six times, as in malice.

Ill-natured, spiteful, moody wretch! thought I (trembling at his strange silence, after such hurt as he had done me, and what I had endured, and still felt in my stomach and arms), what an odious creature thou art.

At last I broke silence. I thought I would be as mild as I could, and not provoke him to do me farther mischief. Well have you done, Sir Hargrave (have you not?) to commit such a violence upon a poor young creature that never did nor thought you evil!

I paused. He was silent.

What distraction have you given to my poor cousins Reeves! How my heart bleeds for them!

I stopt. He was still silent.

I hope, sir, you are sorry for the mischief you have done me; and for the pain you have given to my friends! —I hope, sir——

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Cursed! said he.

I stopt, thinking he would go on: but he said no more; only changing his posture; and then resuming it.

These people, sir, seem to be honest people. I hope you designed only to terrify me. Your bringing me into no worse company is an assurance to me that you meant better than——

Devils all! interrupted he——

I thought he was going on; but he grinned, shook his head, and then again reclined it upon his hand.

I forgive you, sir, the pain you have given me.—But my friends—As soon as day breaks (and I hope that is not far off) I will get the women to let my cousins Reeves——

Then up he started—Miss Byron, said he, you are a *woman;* a *true* woman—and held up his hand, clenched. I knew not what to think of his intention.

Miss Byron, proceeded he, after a pause, you are the most consummate hypocrite that I ever knew in my life: and yet I thought that the best of you all could fall into fits and swoonings whenever you pleased.

I was now silent. I trembled.

D——d fool! ass! blockhead! *woman's* fool!—I ought to be d——d for my credulous folly!—I tell you, Miss Byron —then he looked at me as if he were crazy; and walked two or three times about the room.

To be dying one half hour, and the next to look so provoking——

I was still silent.

I could *curse* myself for sending away the parson. I thought I had known something of women's tricks—but yet your arts, your hypocrisy, shall not serve you, madam. What I failed in *here* shall be done *elsewhere*. By the great God of heaven, it shall!

I wept. I *could not* then speak.

Can't you go into fits again? Can't you? said the barbarian; with an air of a piece with his words; and using other words of the lowest reproach.

God deliver me, prayed I to myself, from the hands of this madman!

I arose, and as the candle stood near the glass, I saw

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my vile figure, in this abominable habit, to which, till then, I had paid little attention. Oh how I scorned myself!

Pray, Sir Hargrave, said I, let me *beg* that you will not terrify me further. I will forgive you for all you have hitherto done, and place it to my own account, as a proper punishment for consenting to be thus marked for a vain and foolish creature. Your abuse, sir, give me leave to say, is low and unmanly: but, in the light of a punishment, I will own it to be all deserved: and let here my punishment end, and I will thank you; and forgive you with my whole heart.

Your fate is *determined*, Miss Byron.

Just then came in a servant-maid with a capuchin, who whispered something to him: to which he answered, *That's well*——

He took the capuchin; the maid withdrew; and approached me with it. I started, trembled, and was ready to faint. I caught hold of the back of the elbow-chair.

Your fate is determined, madam, repeated the savage—here, put this on—now fall into fits again—put this on!

Pray, Sir Hargrave——

And pray, Miss Byron: what has not been completed here shall be completed in a safer place: and that in my own way.—Put this on, I tell you. Your compliance may yet befriend you.

Where are the gentlewomen?—Where are——

Gone to rest, madam—John, Frank, called he out.

In came two men-servants.

Pray, Sir Hargrave—Lord protect me—Pray, Sir Hargrave—where are the gentlewomen?—Lord protect me!

Then running to the door, against which one of the men stood—Man, stand out of the way, said I. But he did not: he only bowed.

I cried out, Mrs. ———, I forget your name: Miss ———, and t'other Miss ———, I forget your names—If you are good creatures, as I hoped you were——

I called as loud as my fears would let me.

At last came in the elder sister—O madam! good young gentlewoman! I am glad you are come, said I.

And so am I, said the wicked man.—Pray, Miss Sally, put on this lady's capuchin.

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Lord bless me! for why? for what? I have no capuchin!

I would not permit her to put it on, as she would have done.

The savage then wrapt his arms about mine, and made me so very sensible, by his force, of the pain I had had by the squeeze of the door, that I could not help crying out. The young woman put on the capuchin, whether I would or not.

Now, Miss Byron, said he, make yourself easy; or command a fit, it is all one: my end will be better served by the latter—Miss Sally, give orders.

She ran out with the candle. Frank, give me the cloak, said Sir Hargrave.

The fellow had a red cloak on his arm. His barbarous master took it from him. To your posts, said he.

The two men withdrew in haste. Now, my dearest life, said he, with an air of insult, as I thought, you command your fate, if you are easy.

He threw the cloak about me.

I begged, prayed, would have kneeled to him; but all was in vain: the tiger-hearted man, as Mr. Greville had truly called him, muffled me up in it; and by force carried me through a long entry to the fore door. There was ready a chariot and six; and that Sally was at the door with a lighted candle.

I called out to her. I called out for her mother; for the other sister. I besought him to let me say but six words to the widow.

But no widow was to appear; no younger sister: she was perhaps more tender-hearted than the elder: and, in spite of all my struggles, prayers, resistance, he lifted me into the chariot.

Men on horseback were about it. I thought *that* Wilson was one of them; and so it proved. Sir Hargrave said to that fellow, You know what tale to tell, if you meet with impertinents. And in he came himself.

I screamed. Scream on, my dear, upbraidingly, said he; and barbarously mocked me, imitating, low wretch! the bleating of a sheep—[Could you not have killed him for this, my Lucy?]—Then rearing himself up, Now am I lord of Miss Byron! exulted he.

Still I screamed for help; and he put his hand before my

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mouth, though vowing honour, and such sort of stuff; and, with his unmanly roughness, made me bite my lip. And away lashed the coachman with your poor Harriet.

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LETTER XXXIII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

As the chariot drove by houses, I cried out for help once or twice, at setting out. But, under pretence of preventing my taking cold, he tied a handkerchief over my face, head, and mouth, having first muffled me up in the cloak; pressing against my arm with his whole weight, so that I had not my hands at liberty. And when he had done, he seized them, and held them both in his left hand, while his right arm thrown round me, kept me fast on the seat: and except that now and then my struggling head gave me a little opening, I was blinded.

But at one place on the road, just after I had screamed, and made another effort to get my hands free, I heard voices; and immediately the chariot stopt. Then how my heart was filled with hope! But, alas! it was momentary. I heard one of his men say (that Wilson, I believe), The best of husbands, I assure you, sir; and she is the worst of wives.

I screamed again. Ay, scream and be d——d, I heard said in a stranger's voice, if that be the case. Poor gentleman! I pity him with all my heart. And immediately the coachman drove on again.

The vile wretch laughed; That's *you*, my dear, and hugged me round. *You* are the d——d wife. And again he laughed: By my soul, I am a charming contriver! Greville, Fenwick, Orme, where are you now?—By my soul, this will be a pretty story to tell, when all your fears are over, my Byron!

I was ready to faint several times. I begged for air: and when we were in an open road, and I suppose there was nobody in sight, he vouchsafed to pull down the blinding handkerchief, but kept it over my mouth; so that, except now and then, that I struggled it aside with my head (and my neck is still, my dear, very stiff with my efforts to free my face), I could only make a murmuring kind of noise.

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The curtain of the fore-glass was pulled down, and generally the canvas on both sides drawn up. But I was sure to be made acquainted when we came near houses, by his care again to blind and stifle me up.

A little before we were met by my deliverer, I had, by getting one hand free, unmuffled myself so far as to see (as I had guessed once or twice before by the stone pavements) that we were going through a town; and then I again vehemently screamed. But he had the cruelty to thrust a handkerchief into my mouth, so that I was almost strangled; and my mouth was hurt, and is still sore, with that and his former violence of the like nature.

Indeed, he now and then made apologies for the cruelty, to which, he said, he was compelled, by my invincible obstinacy, to have recourse. I was sorely hurt, he said, to be the wife of a man of his consideration! But I *should* be that, or worse. He was *in for it* (he said more than once), and *must* proceed. I might see that all my resistance was in vain. He had me in his net: and, d—n him, if he were not revenged for all the trouble I had given. You keep no terms with me, my Byron, said he once; and d—n me, if I keep any with you!

I doubted not his malice: his love had no tenderness in it: but how could I think of being consenting, as I may say, to such barbarous usage, and by a man so truly odious to me? What a slave had I been in spirit, could I have qualified on such villainous treatment as I had met with! or had I been able to desert myself!

At one place the chariot drove out of the road, over rough ways, and little hillocks, as I thought, by its rocking; and then, it stopping, he let go my hands, and endeavoured to soothe me. He begged I would be pacified, and offered, if I would forbear crying out for help, to leave my eyes unmuffled all the rest of the way. But I would not, I told him, give such a sanction to his barbarous violence.

On the chariot's stopping, one of his men came up, and put a handkerchief into his master's hands, in which were some cakes and sweetmeats; and gave him also a bottle of sack, with a glass. Sir Hargrave was very urgent with me to take some of the sweetmeats, and to drink a glass of the wine: but I had neither stomach nor will to touch either.

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He ate himself very cordially. God forgive me, I wished in my heart, that there were pins and needles in every bit he put into his mouth.

He drank two glasses of the wine. Again he urged me. I said, I hoped I had eaten and drank my last.

You have no dependence upon my honour, madam, said the villain; so cannot be disappointed much, do what I will. Ungrateful, proud, vain, obstinate, he called me.

What signifies, said he, shewing politeness to a woman who has shown none to me, though she was civil to every other man? Ha, ha, ha, hah! What, my sweet Byron, I don't hit your *fancy! You don't like my morals!* laughing again. My lovely fly, said the insulting wretch, hugging me round in the cloak, how prettily have I wrapt you about in my web!

Such a provoking low wretch!—I struggled to free myself; and unhooked the curtain of the fore-glass: but he wrapt me about the closer, and said he would give me his garter for my girdle, if I would not sit still, and be orderly. Ah, my charming Byron! said he, your opportunity is over —all your struggles will not *avail* you—will not *avail* you. That's a word of your own, you know. I will, however, forgive you, if you promise to love me now. But if you stay till I get you to the allotted place; then, Madam, take what follows.

I saw that I was upon a large, wild, heath-like place, between two roads, as it seemed. I asked nothing about my journey's end. All I had to hope for as to an escape (though then I began to despair of it), was upon the road, or in some town. My journey's end, I knew, must be the beginning of new trials; for I was resolved to suffer death rather than to marry him. What I now was most apprehensive about, was, of falling into fits; and I answered to his barbarous insults as little as possible, that I might not be provoked beyond the little strength I had left me.

Three or four times he offered to kiss me; and cursed my pride for resisting him: making him clasp a cloud, was his speech (aiming at wit), instead of his Juno; calling the cloak a cloud.

And now, my dear Byron, said he, if you will not come to compromise with me, I must dress you again for the journey.

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We will stop at a town a little further (beckoning to one of his men, and, on his approaching, whispering to him, his whole body out of the chariot), and there you shall alight; and a very worthy woman, to whom I shall introduce you, will persuade you, perhaps, to take refreshment, though I cannot.

You are a very barbarous man, Sir Hargrave. I have the misfortune to be in your power. You may dearly repent the usage I have already received from you. You have made my life of no estimation with me. I will not contend.

And tears ran down my cheeks. Indeed, I thought my heart was broke.

He wrapt me up close, and tied the handkerchief about my mouth and head. I was quite passive.

The chariot had not many minutes got into the great road again, over the like rough and sometimes plashy ground, when it stopt on a dispute between the coachman, and the coachman of another chariot and six, as it proved.

Sir Hargrave had but just drawn my handkerchief closer to my eyes, when this happened. Hinder not my tears from flowing, said I; struggling to keep my eyes free, the cloak enough muffling me, and the handkerchief being over my mouth; so that my voice could be but just heard by him, as I imagine.

He looked out of his chariot, to see the occasion of this stop; and then I found means to disengage one hand.

I heard a gentleman's voice directing his own coachman to give way.

I then pushed up the handkerchief with my disengaged hand, from my mouth, and pulled it down over my eyes, and cried out for help: help, for God's sake!

A man's voice (it was my deliverer's, as it happily proved), bid Sir Hargrave's coachman proceed at his peril.

Sir Hargrave, with terrible oaths and curses, ordered him to proceed, and to drive through all opposition.

The gentleman called Sir Hargrave by his name; and charged him with being upon a bad design.

The vile wretch said, he had only secured a runaway wife, eloped to, and intending to elope from, a masquerade, to her adulterer [horrid!]—he put aside the cloak, and appealed to my dress.

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I cried out, No, no, no, five or six times repeated; but could say no more at that instant, holding up then both my disengaged hands for protection.

The wicked man endeavoured to muffle me up again, and to force the handkerchief, which I had then got under my chin, over my mouth; and brutally cursed me.

The gentleman would not be satisfied with Sir Hargrave's story. He would speak to *me*. Sir Hargrave called him impertinent, and other names; and asked who the devil he was? with rage and contempt.—The gentleman, however, asked me, and with an air that promised deliverance, if I were Sir Hargrave's wife.

No, no, no, no—I could only say.

For my own part, I could have no scruple, distressed as I was, and made desperate, to throw myself into the protection, and even into the arms, of my deliverer; though a very fine young gentleman. It would have been *very* hard, had I fallen from bad to bad; had the sacred name of protector been abused by *another* Sir Hargrave, who would have had the *additional* crime of betraying a confidence to answer for. But, however this has proved, an escape from the present evil was all I had in my head at the time.

But you may better conceive, than I can express, the terror I was in, when Sir Hargrave drew his sword, and pushed at the gentleman with such words as denoted (for I could not look that way), he had done him mischief. But when I found my oppressor, my low-meaning, and soon after low-laid oppressor, pulled out of the chariot by the brave, the gallant man (which was done with such force, as made the chariot rock), and my protector safe; I was as near fainting with joy as before I had been with terror. I had shaken off the cloak, and untied the handkerchief.

He carried me in his arms (I could not walk) to his own chariot.

I heard Sir Hargrave curse, swear, and threaten. I was glad, however, he was not dead.

Mind him not, madam, fear him not, said Sir Charles Grandison [you know his noble name, my Lucy]: coachman, drive not over your master: take care of your master: or some such words he said, as he lifted me into his own

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chariot. He came not in, but shut the chariot door, as soon as he had seated me.

He just surveyed, as it were, the spot, and bid a servant let Sir Hargrave know who he was; and then came back to me.

Partly through terror, partly through weakness, I had sunk to the bottom of the chariot. He opened the door, entered, and, with all the tenderness of a brother, soothed me, and lifted me on the seat once more. He ordered his coachman to drive back to Colnebrook. In accents of kindness, he told me, that he had there at present the most virtuous and prudent of sisters, to whose care he would commit me, and then proceed on his journey to town.

How irresistibly welcome to me was his supporting arm, thrown around me, as we *flew* back, compared to that of the vile Sir Hargrave.

Mr. Reeves has given you an account from the angelic sister—Oh, my Lucy! they are a pair of angels!

I have written a long, long letter, or rather five letters in one, of my distresses, of my deliverance: and, when my heart is stronger, I will say more of the persons, as well as minds, of this excellent brother and sister.

But what shall I do with my gratitude! Oh, my dear, I am *overwhelmed* with my gratitude! I can only express it in silence before them. Every look, if it be honest to my heart, however, tells it: reverence mingles with my gratitude—yet there is so much ease, so much sweetness, in the behaviour of both—Oh, my Lucy! Did I not find that my veneration of both is equal; did I not, on examination, find, that the amiable sister is as dear to me, from her experienced tenderness, as her brother from his remembered bravery (which must needs mingle awe with my esteem); in short, that I love the sister, and revere the brother; I should be afraid of my gratitude.

I have over-written myself. I am tired. Oh, my grandmamma! you have never yet, while I have been in London, sent me your ever-valued blessing under your own hand: yet I am sure I had it; and *your* blessings, my dear uncle and aunt Selby; and your prayers, my Lucy, my Nancy, and all my loves; else my deliverance had not perhaps followed my presumptuous folly, in going dressed out, like the fantastic

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wretch I appeared to be, at a vile, a foolish masquerade.—How often, throughout the several stages of my distress, and even in my deliverance, did I turn my eye *to* myself, and *from* myself, with the disgust that made a part, and that not a light one, of my punishment!

And so much, my Lucy, for masquerades, and masquerade-dresses, for ever!

Pray let not anybody unnecessarily be acquainted with this shocking affair: particularly neither Mr. Greville nor Mr. Fenwick. It is very probable, that they (especially Mr. Greville) would be for challenging Sir Hargrave, were it only on a supposition that it would give him an interest to me in the *eye of the world*. You know that Mr. Greville watches for all opportunities to give himself consequence with me.

Were any further mischief to happen to anybody, I should be grieved beyond measure. Hitherto I have reason to think that a transaction so shocking is not very unhappily concluded. May the vile man sit himself down satisfied, and I shall be willing to do so too; provided I never more behold his face.

Mr. Reeves will send you, with the above packet, a letter from Sir Charles Grandison, enclosing one from that vile Wilson. I can write no more just now, and they will sufficiently explain themselves.

Adieu, my dearest Lucy. I need not say how much I am, and ever will be, your faithful affectionate

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER XXXIV.

Sir Charles Grandison to Arch. Reeves, Esq.

Canterbury, February 22.

DEAR SIR,—The enclosed long letter is just now brought to me. I pretend not to judge of the writer's penitence. Yet his confessions seem ingenuous; and he was not under any obligation to put them on paper.

As I presume that you will not think it advisable to make the *ineffectual* attempt upon Miss Byron public by a

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prosecution, perhaps your condescending to let the man's sister know, that her brother, if in earnest, may securely pursue the honest purposes he mentions, may save the poor wretch from taking such courses as might be fatal, not only to himself, but to innocent persons, who otherwise may suffer by his being made desperate.

The man, as you will see by his letter, if you had not a still *stronger* proof, has abilities to do mischief. He has been in bad hands, as he tells us, from his youth upwards, or he might have been a useful member of society. He is a young man; and if yet he could be made *so*, his reformation will take from the number of the profligate, and add to that of the hopeful; and who knows how wide the circle of his acquaintance is, and how many of them may be influenced by his example either way? If he marry the not-dishonest young woman, to whom he seems to be contracted, may not your lenity be a means of securing a whole future family on the side of moral honesty?

His crime, as the attempt was frustrated, is not capital: and, not to mention the service of such an evidence as this, should Sir Hargrave seek for a legal redress, as he sometimes weakly threatens, my hope makes me see a further good that may be brought about by this man's reformation. Wicked masters cannot execute their base views upon the *persons* of the innocent, without the assistance of wicked servants. What a nest of vipers may be crushed at once, or, at least, rendered unhurtful, by depriving the three monsters he names of the aid of such an agent! Men who want to save appearances, and have estates to forfeit, will sometimes be honest of necessity, rather than put themselves into the power of *untried* villains.

You will be so good as to make my compliments to your lady, and to *our* lovely ward. You see, sir, that I join myself with you in the honour of that agreeable relation.

I hope the dear lady has perfectly recovered her health and spirits.—I am, good Mr. Reeves, your most faithful and obedient servant, CHARLES GRANDISON.

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LETTER XXXV.

To the Honourable Sir Charles Grandison, Bart.

Saturday, February 18.

In what an odious light must that wretch appear before the worthiest of men, who cannot but abhor himself!

I am the unhappy man who was hired into the service of the best of young ladies: whom I was the means of betraying into the power of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, from the ball in the Haymarket on Thursday night last.

Your honour has made yourself an *interest* in Miss Byron's fate, as I may say, by your powerful protection. Pardon me if I give you some account of myself, and of transactions which perhaps will otherwise never be known: and this in justice to all round.

My parentage was honest: my education was above my parentage. I set out with good principles: but I fell into a bad service. I was young and of a good natural disposition; but had not virtue enough to resist a temptation: I could not say no to an unlawful thing, when my principals commanded my assent.

I was, at *first* setting out, by favour of friends, taken as clerk to a merchant. In process of time I transacted his business at the custom-house. He taught me to make light of oaths of office; and this by degrees made me think light of all moral obligations, and laid the foundation of my ruin.

My master's name was Bagenhall. He died; and I was to seek. His brother succeeded to his fortune, which was very large: he was brought up to no business: he was a gentleman: his seat is near Reading. I was recommended by him to the service of a gentleman who was nominated to go abroad on a foreign embassy. I will name his name, lest your honour should imagine I have any design to evade the strictest truth; Sir Christopher Lucas; I was to be this gentleman's master of the horse abroad.

The first service my new master employed me in, was to try to get for him the pretty daughter of an honest farmer.

I had been out of place for a twelvemonth. Had I had twenty shillings aforehand in the world, I would, I think,

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have said No. Nevertheless, I consulted, in confidence, my late master's brother upon it. The advice he gave me, was, not to boggle at it: but if, he said, I could manage the matter so as to cheat Sir Christopher, and get the girl for him, and keep the secret, he would give me 50*l.* I abhorred the double treachery of young Mr. Bagenhall: but undertook to serve Sir Christopher: and carried on a treaty with the farmer for his daughter; as if she were to be the wife of Sir Christopher; but not to be owned till he returned from abroad; no, not even if she should prove with child.

I found, in the course of my visits at the farmer's, so much honesty both in father and mother, and so much innocence in the daughter, that my heart relented; and I took an opportunity to reveal Sir Christopher's base design to them; for the girl was designed to be ruined the very first moment that Sir Christopher could be alone with her. Your honour may believe, that I enjoined all three strict secrecy.

Nevertheless, this contriving devil of a master found a way to get the young woman by other means; and, in amorous dalliance, she told him to whom he was obliged for not succeeding before.

In rage he turned me out of his service, in the most disgraceful manner; but without giving any other reasons, than that he knew me to be a villain; and that I knew myself to be one; nor would he give me a character; so I was quite reduced; and but for the kindness of a sister, who keeps an inn in Smithfield, I should have starved, or been obliged to do worse.

I should have told your honour, that the poor farmer and his wife both died of grief in half a year. An honest young man, who dearly loved the young woman, was found drowned soon after: it is feared he was his own executioner. Sir Christopher went not on his embassy. His preparations for it, and his expensive way of life, before and after, reduced him: and he has been long a beggar, as I may say. The poor young woman is now, if living, on the town. I saw her about half a year ago in St. Martin's round-house, taken up as a common prostitute, and charged with picking a pocket. She was a pretty creature, and had a very pious

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turn, when I knew her first. Her father had gone beyond himself in her education: and this was the fruit. What has such a man as Sir Christopher to answer for!—But it is come home to him. I rejoice that this wickedness was not added to my score.

But heavy scenes I had enough afterwards. Being utterly destitute, except what my sister did for me, and not enduring to be a burden to her, I threw myself upon my master Bagenhall. He employed me in mean offices, till his pander died (he is a very profligate man, sir)! and then he *promoted* me to a *still meaner*.

In this way, I grew a shameless contriver. He introduced me to Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, and to Mr. Merceda, a Portuguese Jew. In the service of these three masters, good Heaven forgive me! what villanies was I not the means of perpetrating! Yet I never was so hardened, but I had temporary remorses. But these three gentlemen would never let me rest from wickedness: yet they kept me poor and necessitous, as the only means to keep me what they called *honest;* for they had often reason to think, that had I had any other means of subsistence, I would have been *really* honest.

I was now Mr. Bagenhall's constant servant. Sir Hargrave and Mr. Merceda used to borrow me: but I must say Sir Hargrave is an innocent man to the other two. They caressed me, I speak it to my shame, as a man fit for their turn. I had contrivance; temper; I knew something of everybody. But my sister knows my frequent compunctions; and that I hated the vile course I was in. She used to lecture me enough. She is a good woman.

Will your honour have patience with me a little longer?

Sir Hargrave on the seventh of this month came to my master Bagenhall at Reading, with whom he had double business: one was to take a bond and judgment of him: (Sir Hargrave is no better than an usurer): Mr. Bagenhall has lived a most extravagant life: the other was to borrow me. Mr. Merceda had a scheme on foot at the same time, which he was earnest to engage me in; but it was too shocking; and Mr. Bagenhall came into Sir Hargrave's.

Sir Hargrave told them he designed nothing *more* than a

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violation, if he could get my assistance, of the most beautiful woman in the world. And, sir, to see the villany of the other two; they both, unknown to each other, made proposals to me to trick Sir Hargrave, and to get the lady, each for himself.

But to *me*, Sir Hargrave swore, that he was fully resolved to leave this wicked course of life. Bagenhall and Merceda, he said, were devils; and he would marry, and have no more to say to them. All that was in his view was honest marriage. He said he had never been in the lady's company but once, and that was the day before at Lady Betty Williams's. He said he went thither, knowing she was to be there: for having for some time had it in his head to marry, this was the lady he had pitched upon in his mind, from the character he had of her from every mouth at the Northampton races.

Now, said he, I shall have some difficulty to obtain her, notwithstanding my fortune is so great; for every one who sees her is in love with her; and he named several gentlemen who laid close siege to her.

She brought a servant up with her, said he, who hones after the country, and is actually gone, or soon will. Her cousin inquires of every one after a proper servant for her. You, Wilson, said he, are handsome and genteel: he was pleased to say so. You have a modest, humble look: you know all the duties of a servant: get yourself entertained, and your fortune is made for life, if by your means I obtain the lady. I have already tendered myself, said he. Perhaps she will have me in a few days. I don't expect to be denied, if she be disengaged, as it is said she is. If you can get into her service, you will find out everything. This is all that is to be done: but you must never mention my name, nor ever know anything of me, as I go and come.

Sir Hargrave declared, that his heart was *burnt up* with the love of the lady: and if he succeeded (as he had little doubt, even without my help, had I been actually in Merceda's service), you will, said he, as my lady's servant, be mine of course; you shall never wear a livery; and you shall be my gentleman, till I can get a place for you in the customs. This, may it please your honour, he knew I had long aimed at; and it had been often promised by himself, and my other

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two masters; and was their first promise when they wanted to engage me in any of their schemes, though they never thought more of it when the service was over. If I got but myself engaged, I was, on the day I entered into my lady's service, to have as an earnest ten guineas.

Encouraged by such promises (and the project being an honester one than ever Sir Hargrave, or either of the other two, had sought to engage me in), I offered my service to my lady; and, on Mr. Bagenhall's writing a good character of me, was accepted.

I could have been happy in the service of this lady all the days of my life. She is all goodness: all the servants, everybody, gentle and simple, adored her: but she, unexpectedly, refusing to have Sir Hargrave, and he being afraid that one of her three or four lovers would *cut him out*, he resolved to take more violent measures than he had at first intended.

If any man was ever mad in love, it was Sir Hargrave. But then he was as mad with anger to be refused. Sir Hargrave was ever thought to be one of the proudest men in England: and he complained that my lady used him worse than she did anybody else. But it was not *her* way to use anybody ill, I saw that.

Nevertheless he was resolved to strike a *bold stroke for a wife*, as were his words from the title of a play: and between us we settled the matter in one night: for I had found means to get out unknown to the family.

It would be trespassing too much upon your honour's patience, to be very particular in our contrivance. I will be as brief as possible.

My lady was to go to a masquerade. I got into the knowledge of everything how and about it. The maids were as full of the matter as their master and mistresses.

It was agreed to make the chairman fuddled. Two of *Mr. Merceda's footmen* were to undertake the task. Brandy was put into their liquor, to hasten them.

They were soon overcome. The weather was cold: they drank briskly, and were laid up safe. I then hired two chance chairmen, and gave them orders, as had been contrived.

I had twenty guineas given me in hand for my encouragement; in which were included the promised ten.

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I had, when I was my first master Bagenhall's clerk, made acquaintance with several clerks of the custom-house, particularly with one Awberry, a sober modest man, who has two sisters; to one of whom I am contracted, and always, for two years past, intended to make my wife, as soon as I should be in any way to maintain her. The mother is a widow. All of them are very honest people.

Mr. Awberry, the brother, being assured by me (and I was well assured of it myself, and had no doubt about it), that marriage was intended; and knowing Sir Hargrave's great estate (and having indeed seen Sir Hargrave on the occasion, and received his protestations of honour), engaged his mother and sisters in it; and the result, as to them and me, was, that I was to receive, as soon as the knot was tied, a hundred guineas besides the twenty; and, moreover, an absolute promise of a place; and twenty pounds a year till I got it; and then my marriage with young Miss Awberry was to follow.

The widow has an annuity of thirty pounds, which, with her son's salary, keeps them above want.

She lives at Paddington. There is a back-door and garden, as it happens, convenient to bring anybody in, or carry anybody out, secretly; and hither it was resolved, if possible, that the lady should be brought, and a Fleet parson and his clerk ready stationed, to perform the ceremony; and then all that the bridegroom wished was to follow of course.

Sir Hargrave doubted not (though he was fruitful in contrivances, and put many others in practice), but he should be detected if he carried the lady to his own house. And as he was afraid that the chairmen (notwithstanding several other artful contrivances), would be able to find out the place they carried her to, he had ordered his chariot and six to be at the widow Awberry's by six in the morning, with three servants on horseback, armed, and a horse and pistols besides. After marriage and consummation, he was resolved to go to his house on the forest, but not to stay there; but to go to Mr. Merceda's house near Newbury, where he doubted not but he should be secret till he thought fit to produce the lady, as Lady Pollexfen: and often, very often, did he triumph on the victory he should obtain over her other lovers, and over her own proud heart, as he would have it to be.

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The parson, sir, came: the clerk was there; but what with fits, prayers, tears, and one thing or other (at one time the lady being thought irrecoverable, having received some unintended hurt in her struggling to get out of a door, as I heard it was), Sir Hargrave in terror dismissed the parson; and resolved to carry the lady (who by that time was recovered) in the chariot to his seat at Windsor; and then, staying there only to marry, go to Newbury: and from thence break out by degrees, as the matter should be taken.

My lady screamed, resisted, and did all that woman could do to get free: and more than once, people who heard her cry out for help were put on a wrong scent: and had we not met with your honour (who would see with your own eyes, and hear with your own ears), the affair had been all over in the way Sir Hargrave wished, and was at so much pains and expense to effect. For, sir, the chariot generally drove so fast, that before passengers could have *resolved* whether to interfere or not, we should have been out of sight or reach.

Sir Hargrave is in the greatest rage with us all, because we stood not better by him. He refuses any favour to me, and threatens to pistol me the moment he sees me. That's to be my reward.

We were four at setting out from Paddington; but one of the servants was despatched to prepossess an old servant of Sir Hargrave's mother, at Colnebrook, who keeps there a kind of haberdashery shop; and where he proposed to get some refreshment for the lady, if he could make her take any. For my part, I wonder how she kept out of fits on the road. She had enow of them at Paddington.

The two servants who stayed about Sir Hargrave, are discharged with all the marks of indignation that a master incensed by such a disappointment could express: and, as I said before, he is resolved to pistol me the moment he sees me. Yet I too well served him for the peace of my conscience.

A coach and four was ordered to carry the widow and her two daughters to Reading, to the New Inn there, where they were to reside for a week or so, till all was blown over; and that they might be out of the way of answering questions: and my *brother* Awberry, as I call him, and hope to make him (for he is a very honest man), was to go to them there.

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And there, in all probability, had Sir Hargrave succeeded, and been as good as his word, should I have been the husband of as tender-hearted a young woman as any in the parish she lives in.

Here is a very long letter, may it please you, sir. I have shortened it, however, as much as I could: but in hatred to myself, and the vile ways I have, by excess of good nature, and by meeting with wicked masters, been drawn into—For the clearing of my sister's character, who lives in credit among her neighbours, and of every other person who might otherwise have been suspected—In justice to Mrs. Awberry's, and her two daughters', and her son's characters—And in justice *so far* to Sir Hargrave's, as that he intended marriage (and had he *not*, he would have found no friends in his designs at Paddington); and so far as to clear him of having not offered the least incivility to my lady—[Had he intended, or been provoked so to do, he was too well watched by the widow, and her daughters, to have been permitted; and that by my own request, which was, that they should be ready to run in whenever they heard her cry out, and that they would not leave Sir Hargrave alone with my lady for six minutes, till their hands were joined in wedlock]—In justice, I say, to all these persons, I thought proper thus to give you, sir, all that I knew relating to this wicked transaction. And if, may it please your honour, I were to be taken up, I could say no more before a magistrate; except this, which I had like to have forgot; which is, that had it not been for me, some mischief might have been done between Sir Hargrave's servants and yours, if not to your honour's person.

All that I most humbly beg, is, the pardon of so sweet a lady. I have chosen, ever-to-be-honoured sir, to write to you, whose goodness is so generally talked of, and who have so nobly redeemed and protected her. Mr. Reeves, I know, has suffered too much in his mind to forgive me. He is a worthy gentleman. I am sorry for the disturbance I have given him. I have hopes given me, that I shall get employment on the quays, or as a tide-waiter extraordinary.

Please the Lord, I will never, never more, be the tool of wicked masters. All I wish for is, to be able to do justice to the love of an honest young woman; and I am resolved,

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whether so enabled or not, to starve rather than to go any more, no, not for a single hour, into the service of the iniquitous gentlemen I have so often named in this long letter.

If I might be assured, that I may pursue, unmolested, an honest calling, so as that I may not be tempted or driven into unhappy courses, my heart would be at rest.

There might have been murder in this affair: that shocks me to think of. Oh, sir! good, excellent, brave, and the most worthy of gentlemen, you have given to *me* as great deliverance, as you have to the *lady:* yea, greater; for mine may be a deliverance, if I make a proper use of it, of soul as well as body. Which God grant, as also your honour's health and prosperity, to the prayers of your honour's ever-devoted humble servant, WILLIAM WILSON.

I thought I had something else to say: something it is of *high* importance: your life is threatened, sir: God preserve your precious life. Amen!

—o—

LETTER XXXVI.

Miss Byron to Miss Selby.

Friday, February 24.

MY cousin Reeves has given assurance to the sister of that Wilson, that he may, unmolested by any of us, pursue the best means he can fall upon for the obtaining of an honest livelihood.

In everything it is determined to follow the advice of my deliverer.

What a letter is that fellow's! What men are there in the world!

Of such we have read: but I hoped, that I might have escaped suffering by any such.

We are extremely disturbed at the fellow's postscript; and the more, as we are told by several people, that Sir Hargrave will not sit down quietly; but threatens vengeance upon Sir Charles. I wish I had not come to London.

I hope my grandmamma's spirits are not affected by what she knows of the matter. It was very good of my aunt Selby

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to take the measures she did, in softening every circumstance, and not to let her know anything till the danger was over. But, indeed, it was but the natural effect of that prudence which regulates all the actions of my honoured aunt.

My grandmamma has such strength of mind, that now she knows I am safe, and not unhappy, I daresay she will by degrees bear to hear my *narrations* read. She will be more uneasy if she thinks anything is kept from her.

Yet I know that her tenderness and her love for her Harriet will cost her some anguish, some sighs, some tears, as she reads, or hears read, the cruelty her girl has been treated with: who, so tenderly brought up, so greatly indulged, never before knew what harshness was. But then she will have more joy, I hope, in my deliverance, than she will have pain in my sufferings. And pray let her know, that I am every day less and less sensible of the pain in my stomach, of which I was so apprehensive, as really, at the time, to think it a mortal blow. My grandmamma has told us girls, you know, my Lucy, twenty and twenty frightful stories of the vile enterprises of men against innocent creatures; and will therefore call to mind stories which have concluded much worse than, blessed be God! mine has done.

Just now I have received a congratulatory packet of letters:

One from my aunt Selby, such a sweetly kind, such a truly maternal letter!

One from my dearest grandmamma. I will put it next my heart, whenever I feel there any of that pain of which she is so kindly apprehensive.

One from Nancy—Dear girl!—She is very generous to forget her own malady to condole and congratulate me. Your brother James, my Lucy, has written me a very kind letter. He is a good young man: God keep him so! What a mischievous creature is a bad man!

I have a charming letter, by the post, from my godfather Deane: he has heard nothing of what has happened; and I am sure is too solicitous for my welfare to take it well, if I do not let him know something about it: I will therefore soon write to him.

But *your* letter, my Lucy!—What, I warrant, you thought

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I had forgot *your* letter in the enumeration of the contents of the precious packet! If I *had*, your goodness, your love, might have made you forgive me: but I never would have forgiven myself.

But you and I, my dear, write for all to see what we write: and so I reserved yours to be last mentioned. Only I slid in my godfather Deane's, between; not because I love him better than I do my Lucy—No, that is impossible!—But because I had a mind to show you, that I was hastening to be quite well, and so assumed my little saucy tricks, and surprises, as if it were *possible* for me to be heedless, where my love to my Lucy was in the question.

And so you expect the particular character and description of the persons of this more than amiable brother and sister. Need you to have told me that you do? And could you think, that after having wasted so many quires of paper in giving you the characters of people, many of whom deserved not to be drawn out from the common crowd of mortals, I would forbear to give you those of persons who adorn the age in which they live, and even human nature?

You don't question, you say, if I begin in their praises, but my gratitude will make me write in a *sublime style*; so you phrase it; and are ready, you promise me, to take with allowance all the fine things from me, which Mr. Reeves has already taught you to expect.

You may be right in your expectations, as far as I know; for my grandfather (so many years ago) used to say, that his little Byron was an enthusiast in her gratitude. But, however, when I say anything of the exalted minds, of the expanded hearts, of the amiable manners, of this happy brother and sister, which seems to exceed, in my praises, the bounds, you will all be willing to set me, then let the overflowings be carried to account of the *grateful* enthusiasm, and *only* to that.

Which shall I begin with? You will have a sharp look out upon me, you say: Ah, my Lucy! I know what you mean. But I am safe from everything but my gratitude, I will assure you.

And so, if I begin with the character of the brother, then you will join with my uncle, shake your head and cry, Ah!

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my Harriet! If I begin with the sister, will you not say, that I save my choicest subject for the last? How difficult is it to avoid censure when there is a resolution taken to be censorious!

Well, but keep a *look-out*, if you please, my Lucy: Not the least shadow of reserve shall it give to my heart: My pen shall be honest to that heart; and I shall be benefited, I am sure, by the *faithful wounds* of such affectionate, and equally beloved as revered *friends*—And so, pen, take thy course.

Miss Grandison—Yes, my volant, my self-conducted quill, begin with the sister, say my Lucy what she pleases——

Miss Grandison is about twenty-four; of a fine stature: she has dignity in her aspect; and a very penetrating black eye, with which she does what she pleases: her hair is black, very fine and naturally curls: she is not fair; but her complexion is delicate and clear, and promises a long duration to her loveliness: her features are generally regular: her nose is a little aquiline; but that is so far from being a blemish, that it gives a kind of majesty to her other features: her teeth are white and even: her mouth is perfectly lovely; and a modest archness appears in her smiles, that makes one both love and fear her, when she begins to speak. She is finely shaped; and, in her air and whole appearance, perfectly genteel.

She herself says, that before her brother came to England, she was thought to be proud, pert, and lofty: but I hardly believe her; for the man lives not, it is my belief, who in fourteen months' time (and Sir Charles has not been longer arrived) could so totally eradicate those qualities in a mind of which they had taken possession, as that they should not occasionally show themselves.

She has charming spirits. I daresay she sings well, from the airs she now and then warbles in the gaiety of her heart, as she goes up and down stairs: she is very polite; yet has a vein of raillery, that, were she *not* polite, would give one too much apprehension for one's ease: but I am sure she is frank, easy, and goodhumoured: and, by turning over all the just and handsome things which are attributed to herself, to her brother's credit, she must be equally humble and generous.

She says, she has but lately taken a very great liking to

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reading: but I am ready to question what she says, when she speaks anything that some would construe to her disadvantage. She pretends, that she was too volatile, too gay, too airy, to be confined to sedentary amusements. Her father, however, according to the genteelest and most laudable modern education for women, had given her a master, who taught her history and geography; in both which she *acknowledges* she made some progress. In music, she *owns* she has skill: but I am told by her maid, who attended me by her young lady's direction, and who delights to praise her mistress, that she reads and speaks French and Italian; that she writes finely; and is greatly admired for her wit, prudence, and obligingness. Nobody, said Jenny (who is a sensible young woman, a clergyman's daughter, well educated, and very obliging), can stand against her good-natured raillery. Her brother, she says, is not spared: but he takes delight in her vivacity, and gives way to it; when it is easy to see, that he could take her down if he pleased. And then, added this good young woman, she is an excellent manager in a family, finely as she is educated [I rejoiced to hear that, for the honour of our reading ladies, as in Miss Clements' case]: she knows everything, and how to direct what should be done, from the private family dinner to a sumptuous entertainment; and every day inspects, and approves, or alters, the bill of fare. By the way, my Lucy, she is an early riser—Do you mind that? And so can do everything with ease, pleasure, and without hurry and confusion: for all her servants are early risers, of course. What servants can for shame be in bed, at a reasonable hour to be up, when they have a master or mistress's example for early rising?

Yet this fine lady loves to go to the public places, and often goes, and makes a brilliant figure there. She has time for them, and earns her pleasures by her early rising.

Miss Grandison, Jenny tells me, has two humble servants [I wonder she has not two-and-twenty]: one is Sir Walter Watkyns, a man of a large estate in Somersetshire; the other is Lord G——, son of the Earl of G——, but neither of them highly approved by her: yet, Jenny says, they are both of them handsome men, and admired by the ladies:

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this makes me afraid, that they are modern men; and pay their court by the exterior appearance, rather than by interior worth. Who, my Lucy, that has heard what my late grandfather has said, and my grandmamma still says, of the men in their youthful days, will not say, that we have our lots cast in an age of petits-maîtres, and insignificants?

Such an amiable woman is Miss Charlotte Grandison—May I be found, on further acquaintance, but half as lovely in her eyes, as she is in mine!—Don't be jealous, Lucy! I hope I have a large heart. I hope there is room in it for half a dozen sweet female friends!—Yes, although another love were to intervene. I could not bear, that even the affection due to the man of my choice, were I to marry, should, like Aaron's rod, swallow up all the rest.

But now for her brother—my deliverer!

But pray now, Lucy, don't you come with your sharp *look out:* I warrant you will expect, on this occasion, to read the tumults of the poor girl's heart in her character and description of a man, to whom she is so much obliged! —But what if she disappoint you, and yet do justice to his manifold excellences? What if she finds some faults in him, that his sister has not?

Parading Harriet, methinks you say! Teasing girl! Go on, go on; leave it to *us* to find you out: and take care that the very faults you pretend to discover, do not pass for a colour only, and lead to your detection.

Thank you, Lucy, for your caution: but I will not be obliged to it. My pen shall follow the dictates of my heart; and if it be as honest to me, as I think it is to everybody else, I hope I have nothing to fear either from *your* look-out, or, which is still a sharper, my uncle Selby's.

Sir Charles Grandison, in his person, is really a very fine man. He is tall; rather slender than full: his face in shape is a fine oval; he seems to have florid health; health confirmed by exercise.

His complexion seems to have been naturally too fine for a man: but, as if he were above being regardful of it, his face is overspread with a manly sunniness [I want a word], that shows he has been in warmer climates than England: and so it seems he has; since the tour of Europe has not

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contented him. He has visited some parts of Asia, and even of Afric, Egypt particularly.

I wonder what business a *man* has for such fine teeth, and so fine a mouth, as Sir Charles Grandison might boast of, were he vain.

In his aspect there is something great and noble, that shows him to be of rank. Were kings to be chosen for beauty and majesty of person, Sir Charles Grandison would have few competitors. His eye—Indeed, my Lucy, his eye shows, if possible, more of sparkling intelligence than that of his sister——

Now pray be quiet, my dear uncle Selby! What is beauty in a man to me? You all know that I never thought beauty a qualification in a man.

And yet, this grandeur in his person and air is accompanied with so much ease and freedom of manners, as engages one's love with one's reverence. His good breeding renders him very accessible. His sister says, he is always the first to break through the restraints, and to banish the diffidences, that will generally attend persons on a quite new acquaintance. He *may;* for he is sure of being acceptable in whatever he does or says.

Very true, Lucy: shake your head if you please.

In a word, he has such an easy, yet manly politeness, as well in his dress as in his address (no singularity appearing in either), that were he *not* a fine figure of a man, but were even plain and hard-featured, he would be thought (what is far more eligible in a man than mere beauty) very agreeable.

Sir Charles Grandison, my dear, has travelled, we may say, to some purpose.

Well might his sister tell Mr. Reeves, that whenever he married he would break half a score hearts.

Upon my word, Lucy, he has too many personal advantages for a woman, who loved him with *peculiarity*, to be easy with, whatever may be *his* virtue, from the foible our sex in general love to indulge for handsome men. For, oh my dear! women's eyes are sad giddy things; and will run away with their sense, with their understandings, beyond the power of being overtaken either by stop-thief or hue-and-cry.

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I know that here you will bid me take care not to increase the number of the giddy; and so I will, my Lucy.

The good sense of this real fine gentleman is not, as I can find, rusted over by sourness, by moroseness: he is above quarrelling with the world for trifles: but he is still more above making such compliances with it, as would impeach either his honour or conscience. Once Miss Grandison, speaking of her brother, said, My brother is valued by those who know him best, not so much for being a handsome man; not so much for his birth and fortune; nor for this or that single worthiness: as for being, in the great and yet comprehensive sense of the word, a *good man*. And at another time she said, that he lived to himself, and to his own heart; and though he had the happiness to please everybody, yet he made the judgment or approbation of the world matter but of second consideration. In a word, added she, Sir Charles Grandison, my *brother* (and when she looks proud, it is when she says, *my brother*), is not to be misled either by false glory, or false shame, which he calls, The great snares of virtue.

What a man is this, so to act!—What a woman is this, so to distinguish her brother's excellences!

What a poor creature am I, compared to either of them! And yet I have had my admirers. So perhaps may still more faulty creatures among their inferiors. If, my Lucy, we have so much good sense as to make fair comparisons, what have we to do but to look forward rather than backward, in order to obtain the grace of humility?

But let me tell you, my dear, that Sir Charles does not look to be so great a self-denier, as his sister seems to think him, when she says, he lives to himself, and to his own heart, rather than to the opinion of the world.

He dresses to the fashion, rather richly, 'tis true, than gaudily; but still richly: so that he gives his fine person its full consideration. He has a great deal of vivacity in his whole aspect; as well as in his eye. Mrs. Jenny says, that he is a great admirer of handsome women. His equipage is perfectly in taste, though not so much to the glare of taste, as if he aimed either to inspire or show emulation. He seldom travels without a set, and suitable attendants; and

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what I think seems a little to savour of singularity, his horses are not docked: their tails are only tied up when they are on the road. This I took notice of when we came to town. I want, methinks, my dear, to find some fault in his outward appearance, were it but to make you think me impartial; my gratitude to him, and my veneration for him notwithstanding.

But if he be of opinion that the tails of these noble animals are not only a natural ornament, but are of real use to defend them from the vexatious insects that in summer are so apt to annoy them (as Jenny just now told me was thought to be his reason for not depriving his cattle of a defence, which nature gave them), how far from a dispraise is this humane consideration! And how, in the more minute as well as we may suppose in the greater instances, does he deserve the character of the man of mercy, who will be merciful to his beast!

I have met with persons, who call those men *good*, that yet allow themselves in liberties which no good man can take. But I dare say, that Miss Grandison means by *good*, when she calls her brother, with so much pride, *a good man*, what I, and what you, my Lucy, would understand by the word.

With so much spirit, life, and gallantry, in the first appearance of Sir Charles Grandison, you may suppose, that had I not been so dreadfully terrified and ill-used, and so justly apprehensive of worse treatment; and had I been offered another protection; I should hardly have acted the frighted bird flying from the hawk, to which, as Mr. Reeves tells me, Sir Charles (though politely, and kindly enough, yet too sensibly for my recollection) compared me.

Do you wonder, Lucy, that I cannot hold up my head, when I recollect the figure I must make in that odious masquerade habit, hanging by my clasping arms about the neck of such a young gentleman? Can I be more effectually humbled than by such a recollection? And yet is not this an instance of that *false shame* in me, to which Sir Charles Grandison is so greatly superior?

Surely, surely, I have *had* my punishment for *my* compliances with this foolish world. False glory, and false shame, the poor Harriet has never been totally above. Why

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was I so much indulged? Why was I allowed to stop so many miles short of my journey's end, and then complimented, as if I had no farther to go?—But surely, I was past all *shame*, when I gave my consent to make such an appearance as I made, among a thousand strangers, at a masquerade!

But now, I think, something offers of blame in the character of this almost faultless man, as his sister, and her Jenny, represent him to be.

I cannot think, from a hint given by Miss Grandison, that he is quite so frank, and so unreserved, as his sister is. Nay, it was more than a hint: I will repeat her very words: She had been mentioning her own openness of heart, and yet confessing that she would have kept one or two things from him, that affected him not. 'But as for my brother,' said she, 'he winds one about, and about, yet seems not to 'have more curiosity than one would wish him to have. 'Led on by this smiling benignity, and fond of his attention 'to my prattle, I have caught myself in the midst of a tale 'of which I intended not to tell him one syllable.

'O Sir Charles! where am I got? have I said; and 'suddenly stopt.

'Proceed, my Charlotte! No reserves to your nearest 'friend.

'Yet he has *his*, and I have winded and winded about 'him, as he has done about me, but all to no purpose.

'Nevertheless, he has found means, insensibly, to set me 'on again with my story, till I had told him all I knew of 'the matter; and all the time I was intending only that 'my frankness should be an example to him; when he, 'instead of answering my wishes, double-locked the door of 'his heart, and left not so much as the key-hole uncovered 'by which I might have peeped into it; and this, in one or 'two points, that I thought it imported me to know. And 'then have I been ready to scold.'

Now this reserve to such a sister, and in points that she thinks it imports her to know, is what I do not like in Sir Charles. A *friend* as well as a sister! ought there to be a secret on one side, when there is none on the other? Very likely he would be as reserved to a wife: And is not

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marriage the highest state of friendship that mortals can know? And can friendship and reserve be compatible? Surely, no.

His sister, who cannot think he has one fault, excuses him, and says, that her brother has no other view in drawing her on to reveal her own heart, but the better to know how to serve and oblige her.

But then, might not the same thing be said in behalf of the curiosity of so generous a sister? Or, is Sir Charles so conscious of his own superiority, as to think he can give advice to her, but wants not hers to him? Or, thinks he meanly of our sex, and highly of his own? Yet there are but two years' difference in their age: and, from sixteen to twenty-four, I believe, women are generally more than two years aforehand with the men in ripeness of understanding; though, after that time, the men may ripen into a superiority.

This observation is not my own; for I heard a very wise man once say, that the intellects of women usually ripen sooner than those of men; but that those of men, when ripened, like trees of slow growth, generally hold longer, are capable of higher perfection, and serve to nobler purposes.

Sir Charles has seen some more of the world, it may be said, than his sister has: he has travelled. But is not human nature the same in every country, allowing only for different customs?—Do not love, hatred, anger, malice, *all* the passions in short, good or bad, shew themselves by like effects in the faces, hearts, and actions of the people of every country? And let me make ever such strong pretensions to knowledge, from their far-fetched and dear-bought experience, cannot a penetrating spirit learn as much from the passions of a Sir Hargrave Pollexfen in England, as it could from a man of the same or the like ill qualities, in Spain, in France, or in Italy? And why is the Grecian Homer, to this day, so much admired, as he is in all these nations, and in every other nation where he has been read and will be, to the world's end, but because he writes to nature? And is not the language of nature one language throughout the world, though there are different modes of speech to express it by?

But I shall go out of my depth. All I mean (and, from

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the frankness of my own heart, you will expect from me such a declaration) is, that I do not love that a man so *nearly* perfect, be his motives what they will, should have reserves to such a sister. Don't you think, Lucy, that this seems to be a kind of *fault* in Sir Charles Grandison? Don't you think, that it would mingle some *fear* in a sister's love of him? And should one's love of so amiable a brother be dashed or allayed with *fear?* He is said to be a good man: and a good man I daresay he *is:* What secrets can a good man have, that such a sister, living with him in the same house, and disdaining not, but, on the contrary, priding herself in, the title of her brother's *housekeeper,* should not be made acquainted with? Will a man so generously look upon her as he would upon a *mere* housekeeper?—Does not confidence engage confidence?—And are they not by *nature,* as well as inclination, friends?

But I fancy I am acting the world, in its malevolence, as well as impertinence: that world, which thinks itself affronted by great and superior merit; and takes delight to bring down exalted worth to its own level. But, at least, you will collect from what I have written, an instance of my *impartiality;* and see, that, though bound to Sir Charles by a tie of gratitude which never can be dissolved, I cannot excuse him, if he be guilty of a diffidence and reserve to his generous sister, which she is above showing to him.

If I am allowed to be so happy, as to cultivate this desirable acquaintance [and I hope it is not their way to leave those whom they have relieved and raised, in order to shine upon, and bless, only *new* objects of compassion], then I will closely watch every step of this excellent man; in hope, however, to find him as perfect as report declares him, that I may fearlessly make him my theme, as I shall delight to make his sister my example. And if I were to find any *considerable* faults in him, never fear, my dear, but my gratitude will enlarge my charity in his favour. But I shall, at the same time, arm my heart with those remembered failings, lest my gratitude should endanger it, and make me a hopeless fool.

Now, my uncle, do not be *very* hard on your niece. I am sure, very sure, that I am not in danger *as yet:* and, indeed, I will tell you, by my Lucy, whenever I find out that I am.

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Spare, therefore, my dear uncle Selby, all your *conjectural constructions.*

And, indeed, you should in pity spare me, my dear sir, at present; for my spirits are still weak: I have not yet forgiven myself for the masquerade affair: especially since Mr. Reeves has hinted to me, that Sir Charles Grandison (as he judges from what he dropt about that foolish amusement) approves not of masquerades.. And yet self-partiality has suggested several strong pleas in my favour; indeed by way of extenuation only. How my judge, CONSCIENCE, will determine upon those pleas, when counsel has been heard on both sides, I cannot say: yet I think, that an acquittal from this brother and sister would go a great way to make my conscience easy.

I have not said one half of what I intended to say of this extraordinary man. But having imagined, from the equal love I have to his admirable sister, that I had found something to blame him for, my impartiality has carried me out of my path; and I know not how to recover it, without going a great way back. Let, therefore, what I have further to say, mingle in with my future narratives, as new occasions call it forth.

But yet I will not suffer any other subject to interfere with that which fills my heart with the praises, the due praises, of this worthy brother and sister; to which I intended to consecrate this rambling and very imperfect letter: and which here I will conclude, with assurances (however needless I hope they are) of duty, love, and gratitude, where so much due from your HARRIET BYRON.

—o—

LETTER XXXVII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

February 24 and 25.

Now have I near a week to go back, my Lucy, with my current narrative, having been thrown behind hand by the long letters I have been obliged to write, to give you an account of my distress, of my deliverance, of the characters of this noble brother and sister, and a multitude of coincidences

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and reflections, which all my dear friends expect, as they fall in, from the pen of their Harriet. And this letter shall therefore be a kind of diary of that week; only that I will not repeat what my cousin Reeves has told me he has written.

On Monday I was conducted home in safety, by my kind protector and his amiable sister.

Mrs. Reeves, Lady Betty, and Miss Clements, are in love with them both.

My cousin has told you, how much they disappointed us, in declining to stay dinner. What shall we do, if they are not as fond of our company as we are of theirs? We are not used to be slighted, you know: and to be slighted by those we love, there can be no bearing of that: but I hope this will not be the case.

At tea, the name of Sir Rowland Meredith carried me instantly down.

Mr. Reeves had told the good knight, on his calling on the Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and on this day, before we returned from Colnebrook, that I had been over-fatigued at the masquerade on Thursday night [*and so I was*]; and was gone a little way out of town. *Carried* he should have said; I was carried with a witness!

Sir Rowland took notice, that I must have had a smart illness for the time, by my altered countenance. You are, and must be, ever lovely, Miss Byron: but I think you look not quite so serene, you don't look so *composed,* as you used to do. But I was afraid you were denied to my longing sight. I was afraid you would let your papa go down to Caermarthen, without giving him an opportunity to bless his cross girl. It is in vain, I fear, to urge you—He stopt, and looked full in my face.—Pray, Sir Rowland, said I, how does my *brother* Fowler?

Why, ay, that's the deuce of it! Your *brother* Fowler. But as the honest man says, so say I; I will not tease you. But never, never, will you have—But no more of that—I come to take my leave of you. I should have set out this very morning, could I have seen you on Saturday, or yesterday: but I shall go to-morrow morning early. You are glad of that, madam, I am sure.

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Indeed, Sir Rowland, I shall always respect and value you: and I hope I shall have your good wishes, sir——

Yes, yes, madam, you need not doubt it. And I will humble all the proud women in Wales, by telling them of Miss Byron.

You tell me, my Lucy, that you were all moved at one of the conversations I gave you between the knight, Mr. Fowler, and myself.

Were I to be as particular in my account of what passed on Sir Rowland's taking leave of me, as I was on that other occasion, and were you to judge by the effect his honest tenderness had on me, as I craved his blessing, and as he blessed me (the big tears, unheeded by himself, straying down his reverend cheeks), I think you would have been in like manner affected.

Mr. Fowler is to go down after him—If—if—if, said the knight, looking fervently in my face——

I should be glad, I said, to see, and to wish my *brother* a good journey.

Tuesday morning early I had a kind inquiry after my rest from Miss Grandison, in her brother's name, as well as in her own. And about eleven o'clock came the dear lady herself. She would run up stairs to me, following Sally—in her dressing-room, say you?—She shall not come down.

She entered with the maid—Writing, my dear! said she. I one day hope, my Harriet, you will shew me all you write—There, there (sitting down by me), no bustle. And how *does* my fair friend?—*Well*—I see—*very* well—*To* a lover,—or *of* a lover—that's the same thing.——

Thus, sweetly familiar, ran she on.

Mrs. Reeves entered; Excuse me, madam, said Miss Grandison: this is but one of my flying visits, as I call them: my next shall be to *you*. But perhaps I may not make it in form neither: we are relations, you know. How does Mr. Reeves? He is a good man. At home?——

He is, madam, and will be rejoiced——

I know he will—Why, madam, this our Byron, our Harriet, I should say, looks charmingly!—You had best lock her up. There are many more Sir Hargraves in the world than there are Miss Byrons.

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She told me, that Sir Charles had set out that morning early for Canterbury. He will be absent two or three days, said she. He charged me with his compliments. He did nothing but talk of his new-found sister, from the time he parted with you. I shall promote *your* interest with him, in order to strengthen *my own.* I want to find him out.

Some love-engagements, I suppose, madam? said Mrs. Reeves—It is impossible but the ladies——

The ladies! Ay, that's the thing! The deuce is in them! They will not stay to be asked. These men, the best of them, love nothing but what is attended with difficulty. But all his love-matters he keeps to himself; yet knows all mine—Except one little *entanglement*—Mr. Reeves hears not what we say (looking about her): but you, my dear, shall reveal to me your *sneaking* passion, if you have one, and I will discover mine—But not to *you,* Mrs. Reeves. No married woman shall I trust with what lies in the innermost fold of my heart. Your husbands are always the wiser *for what you* know: though *they* can keep their own counsel: and then, Harriet, Satan-like, the ungenerous wretches, becoming both tempters and accusers, laugh at us, and make it wonderful for a woman to keep a secret.

The ladies will not stay to be asked, Lucy!—An odd hint!—*These men, the* best *of them, love nothing but what comes to them with difficulty.—He keeps all his love-matters to himself.*—ALL! my Lucy!—But indeed she had said before, that if Sir Charles married, *half a dozen hearts would be broken!*

This is nothing to *me,* indeed. But, once more, I wonder why a man of a turn so laudable, should have *any* secrets? The more a good man permits any one to know of his heart, the more good he might do by way of example.—And has he, can he have, *so many* love-secrets, and yet will he not let them transpire to such a sister?—whom (and so she once hinted) it imported to know something of them. But *he* knows best. I am very impertinent to be more concerned for his sister than she is for herself. But I do love her. And one can no more bear to have those slighted whom we love, than one's self.

It is very difficult, Lucy, to know one's self. I am afraid I have a little spice of censoriousness in my temper, which I knew nothing of till now: but, no, it is not censoriousness

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neither: I cannot be so mean as to be censorious: and yet I can now, methinks (for the first time), a little account for those dark spirits who may be too much obliged; and who, despairing to be able ever to return the obligation, are ready to quarrel with the obliger.

Spiteful men say, that we women know not ourselves; know not our own hearts. I believe there is something of truth in the aspersion: but as men and women are *brothers and sisters*, as I may say, are not the men *equally* censurable? and should not we women *say* so, were we to be as spiteful as they? Must it needs be, that a daughter of the same father and mother must be more silly, more unsteady, more absurd, more impertinent, than her brother? I hope not.

Mrs. Reeves, not knowing, as she said afterwards, but Miss Grandison might have something to say to me, withdrew.

I believe I told you last Sunday, said Miss Grandison, of a cousin that we have: a good-natured young fellow: he supped with us last night. Sir Charles was so full of your praises, yet not letting him into your history, that he is half wild to see you.

God forbid, thought I, when she had gone only thus far, that this *cousin* should be proposed!—What an easy thing is it, my Lucy, to alarm a woman on the side of her vanity!

He breakfasted with me this morning, continued she, after Sir Charles had set out; and knowing that I intended to make you a flying visit, he besought me to take him with me: but I would not, my dear, bring an inundation of new admirers upon you: he has a great acquaintance; and is very bold, though not indecent: he is thought to be a modern wit, you must know; and, to speak after an admirable writer, a *minute* philosopher; and thinks he has something to say for himself when his cousin is not present. Before Sir Charles arrived, and when we were in expectation of his coming, being apprised that Sir Charles had a serious turn, he threatened to play upon him, and, as he phrased it, to *bamboozle* him; for these wits and witlings have a language peculiar to themselves. But on Sir Charles's arrival, in two conversations, he drew in his horns, as we say; and now reverences those good qualities which he has not, however, the grace to imitate. Now, I will not answer, but you may have a visit from him, to see the loveliest woman in England. If he comes, see him, or not, as

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you please; and think not yourself under any civil obligation to my brother, or me, to go out of your own way: but I hope he will not be so impertinent. I don't wish you to see him out of my brother's company; because you will see him then to his own advantage. And yet he has such a notion that we women love to be admired and to have handsome things said to us, that he imagines the visit of a man, made for *that* purpose, will give him as free a welcome to the finest women in the world, as painters give to those who come to see their pictures, and for the like reason. But no more of Mr. Grandison. Yet I thought proper to prepare you, if he should take so confident a liberty.

I thanked her.

Well but, my dear, you seem to have a long parcel of writing before you: one, two, three, four—eight leaves—Upon my word!—But Mr. Reeves told me you are a writer; and that you gave an account of all that befell you to *our* grandmother Shirley, to *our* uncle and aunt Selby, to *our* cousins Lucy and Nancy—You see I remember every name: and will you one day let me see what you write?

Most willingly, madam——

Madam! interrupted she. So formal! *Charlotte* say.

With all my heart, my ever-amiable, my ever-kind Charlotte.

So, so—Well may the men say, we love flattery, when, rather than want it, we will flatter one another.

I was going to disclaim flattery: hush, hush, hush, my dear! I doubt not your sincerity. You are a grateful and good girl: but dare you, will you, shew me all and everything about that Greville, that Orme, that Fowler, that Fenwick?—You see, I forget none of the names that your cousin Reeves told me of on Saturday last, and which I made you talk of last Sunday.

All and everything, Miss Grandison: but will you tell me of *your* gentleman?

Will I! No doubt of it: How can young women be together one quarter of an hour, and not lead one another into talk of their lovers? Lord, my dear, those secrets, Sir Charles once said, are the cement of young women's friendships.

And could Sir Charles——

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Could Sir Charles!—Yes, yes, yes. Do you think a man can be a judge of human nature, and leave *women* out of the question? Why, my dear, he finds us out in a minute. Take care of yourself, Harriet—If——

I shall be afraid of him——

What, if you have a good conscience, my dear?——

She then looked very archly. She made me blush.

She looked *more* archly. I blushed, I believe, a deeper dye.

Did I not tell you, Lucy, that she could do what she pleased with her eyes?—But what did she *mean* by this?

In my conscience, my Harriet, little or much, I believe we women are all rogues in our hearts.

And does Miss Grandison say that from our own conscience?

I believe I do: but I must fly: I have ten more visits to pay before I go home to dress. You will tell me all about your fellows, you say?

And you will tell me about your *entanglement*, as you called it.

Why that's a difficulty upon me: but you must encourage me by your freedom, and we will take up our wretches, and lay them down again, one by one, as we run them over, and bid them lie still and be quiet till we recall them to our memory.

But I have not one lover, my Charlotte, to tell *you* of: I always gave them their dismission——

And I have but two, that at present I care to own; and they *won't* be dismissed: but then I have half a dozen, I believe, that have said extravagant things to me; and we must look upon them as lovers elect, you know, who only want to be coquetted with.

Miss Grandison, I hope, cannot think of coquetting?

Not much: only a little now and then, to pay the men in their own coin.

Charming vivacity! said I. I shall be undone, if you don't love me.

No fear, no fear of that!—I am a whimsical creature: but the sun is not more constant in his course than I am steady in my friendships. And these communications on both sides will rivet us to each other, if you treat me not with reserve.

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She arose to go in a hurry. Abate, my dear Charlotte, of half your other visits, and favour me with your company a little longer.

Give me some chocolate then: and let me see your cousins Reeves: I like them. Of the ten visits, six of the ladies will be gone to sales or to plague tradesmen, and buy nothing: anywhere rather than at home: the devil's at home, is a phrase: and our modern ladies live as if they thought so. Two of the other four called upon me, and hardly alighted: I shall do so by them. The other two I shall have paid my compliments to in one quarter of an hour.

I rang for chocolate: and to beg my cousins' company.

They wanted but the word: in they came. My apartment (which she was pleased to admire), then became the subject of a few moments' conversation: and then a much better took place: Sir Charles, I mean.

I asked, if her brother had any relations at Canterbury?

I protest I don't know, said she: but *this* I know, that I have none there. Did I not hint to you that Sir Charles has his secrets?—But he sometimes loves to play with my curiosity: he knows I have a reasonable quantity of that.

Were I his sister——

Then you must do as he would have you, Harriet. I know him to be steady in his purposes: but he is besides so good, that I give up anything to oblige him——.

Your *entanglement*, Charlotte? asked I, smiling. Mr. Reeves knows nothing from that word.

Why, yes, my entanglement; and yet I hate to think of it: so no more of that. It is the only secret I have kept from him; and that is, because he has no suspicion of the matter: if he had, though my life were to be the forfeit, I believe he would have it.

She told us, that she expected us soon to dine with her in St. James's Square: but that she must fix Sir Charles. I hope, said she, you will often drop in upon me; as I will upon you. From this time, we will have nothing but conversation-visits between us; and we will leave the modern world to themselves; and be Queen Elizabeth's women. I am sorry to tell you—Let me whisper it——

And she did; but loud enough for every one to hear:

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although I follow the fashion, and make one fool the more for it, I despise above one half of the women I know.

Miss Grandison, affectedly whispered I again, should *not* do so; because her example is of weight enough to mend them.

I'll be hanged if Miss Byron thinks so, rewhispered she. The age is too far gone. Nothing but a national calamity can do it. But let me tell you, that, at the same time, I despise *more* than one half of the men. But, speaking out, you and I will try to think ourselves wiser than anybody else; and we shall have this comfort, we shall not easily find any of our sex, who by their superior wisdom will give us reason to think ourselves mistaken.

But adieu, adieu, and adieu, my agreeable friends: let me see you, and you, and you, turning to each of the three, as often as is convenient without ceremony: and remember we have been acquainted these hundred years.

Away she hurried, forbidding me to go out of my apartment. Mrs. Reeves could not overtake her. Mr. Reeves had much ado to be in time to make his compliment. She was in her chariot before he could offer his hand.

How pretty it was, my Lucy, in Miss Grandison to remember the names of all my dear friends! She told me indeed, on Sunday, that she should.

If travelling into foreign countries gives ease and politeness, would not one think that Miss Grandison has visited every European court, as well as her brother? If she has not, was it *necessary* for Sir Charles to go abroad to acquire that freedom and ease which his sister has so happily attained without stirring out of the kingdom?

These men had not best despise us, Lucy. There is not, I hope, so much difference in the genius of the two sexes as the proud ones among theirs are apt to imagine; especially when you draw comparisons from equal degrees in both.

O Mr. Walden, take care of yourself, if ever again you and I meet at Lady Betty's!—But this abominable Sir Hargrave! Not one word more of meeting at Lady Betty's! There saw I first the wretch that still, on recollection, strikes terror into my heart!

Wednesday, a visit from Miss Clements and Lady Betty

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took me off my writing about two hours; yet I over-writ myself, and was obliged to lie down for about two more. At night we had Sir John Allestree, and his nephew, and Miss Allestree, and Miss Clements, and Lady Betty, at supper and cards. But, my stomach paining me, about eleven I was permitted to retire to bed.

On Thursday I finished my letters, relating my distresses and deliverance. It was a dreadful subject. I rejoiced when I had concluded it.

The same day Mr. Reeves received Sir Charles's letter, enclosing that of the wretched Wilson. I have often heard my grandfather observe, that men of truly great and brave spirits are most tender and merciful; and that, on the contrary, men of base and low minds are cruel, tyrannical, insolent, wherever they have power. What this short letter, so full of lenity, of mercy, of generous and humane care for the future good of a criminal, and extended to unborn families, as well as to all his acquaintance and friends in being, enables one to judge of the truly heroic Sir Charles Grandison; and what I have experienced of the low, grovelling, unmanly insults of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen (I a poor defenceless silly girl, tricked into his power), are flagrant proofs of the justice of the observation.

I wish, with all my heart, that the best woman in the world were queen of a great nation; and that it were in my power, for the sake of enlarging Sir Charles's ability to do good, to make him her consort; then am I morally sure that I should be the humble means of making a whole people happy!

But as we had all been informed from other hands of Sir Hargrave's threatenings of Sir Charles's life, Wilson's postscript has fastened a weight on my heart, that will not be removed till the danger is overblown.

This day I had Miss Grandison's compliments, with tender inquiries, brought me; and a desire, that as she supposed my first visit would be one of thankful duty, meaning to church (for so I had told her it should), my next might be to her.

Yesterday I received the welcome packet, from so many kind friends: and I prosecuted with the more vigour, for it, my writing task. How easily do we glide into subjects that

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please us!—How swiftly flies the pen!—The characters of Sir Charles and of Miss Grandison were the subjects; and I was amazed to find how much I had written in so short a time.

Miss Grandison sent me in the evening of this day her compliments, joined with those of her brother, who was but just returned from Canterbury.

I wonder what Sir Charles could do at Canterbury so many days, and to have nobody there whom his sister knows.

She would have made me a visit, she sent me word; but that as she expected her brother in the morning, she had intended to have brought him with her. She added, that this morning (Saturday) they should both set out for Colnebrook, in hopes of the Earl and Countess of L—— arriving there as this night from Scotland.

Do you think, Lucy, it would not have been generous in Sir Charles to have made *one* visit, before he set out for so many days, to *that* Canterbury, to the creature on whom he had laid such an obligation? I can only mean as to the *civility* of the thing, you must think; since he was so good as to join in, nay, to propose, the further intimacy, as a brother, and friend, and so forth—I wish that Sir Charles be as sincere in his professions as his sister. He may in his travels (possibly he may) have mistaken some gay weeds for fine flowers, and picked them up, and brought them with him to England: and yet if he has done so, he will even then be superior to thousands who travel, and bring home nothing but the weeds of foreign climates.

He once said, as Miss Grandison told me, that the Countes of L—— is still a more excellent woman than my Charlotte. Ah! Sir Charles! you can tell fibs, I believe. I will not forgive in you those slighter deviations, which we are apt to pass by in other, even tolerable, men.

I wish you may be in earnest, my good sir, in proposing to cultivate an intimate friendship with me, as that of a brother to a sister [shake your head, my Lucy, if you will, I mean no more], that I may be entitled to tell you your faults, as I see them. In your sister *Harriet* you shall find, though a respectful, yet an open-eyed monitor. Our Charlotte thinks you cannot be wrong in anything.

All I fear is, that Sir Charles' tenderness was designed to

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be excited only while my spirits were weak. Yet he bespoke a brotherly relation to me, before Mr. Reeves, when he brought me home, and supposed me stolen from his family in my infancy. This was going farther than was necessary, if he thought to drop the fraternal character soon.

But might not my own behaviour alarm him? The kind, the considerate man, is perhaps compassionate in his intention. Not distinguishing aright my bashful gratitude, and downcast eye, he might be afraid, lest I should add one to the half-score that his sister says will die if he marry.

If this be so, what, my dear, will your Harriet deserve, if *his* caution does not teach *her* some?

After all, I believe, these men in general think our hearts are made of strange combustible materials. A spark struck, a match thrown in—But the best of men, this admirable man, will, I hope, find himself mistaken, if he thinks so of your Harriet.

What ails me, that I am grown such a boaster! Surely, this horrid attempt of Sir Hargrave has not affected my brain. Methinks I am not, somehow or other, as I used to be in my head, or heart, I know not which.

Do you, Lucy, bring me back again, by your reminding love, if you think there is any alteration in your Harriet for the worse: and the rather, as it may prevent my uncle——

But what makes me so much more afraid of my uncle than I used to be?—Yet men, in their raillery [don't, however, read this paragraph to him], are so—I don't know how —so *un*-tender—But let me fall into the hands of my indulgent grandmamma, and aunt Selby, and into your gentle hands, and all will be as it should be.

But what was my subject, before this last seized, and ran away with, my pen? I did not use to wander thus when I had a beaten path before me. Oh this vile, vile Sir Hargrave! If I have a fault in my head, that did not use to be there, it is entirely owing to him. I am sure my heart is not wrong.

But I can write nothing now but of Miss Grandison and her brother. What entirely new scenes are opened to me by my distress:—May I have cause, as Sir Charles wished, to reap good from evil!

I will endeavour to bring Miss Clements into an acquaint-

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ance with these worthies; that is to say, if I have myself the interest to preserve my footing in their favour.

Lady Betty resolves to recommend *herself*. She *will* be acquainted with them, she says, whether they will or not. And yet I could not bear for Lady Betty that she should be slighted by those whom she dotes upon. That, surely, is one of the heaviest of evils. And yet *self-love*, where it is evidently inherent, will enable one to get over it, I believe pretty soon; though nothing but *that* and *pride* can, in *such*. Of some use therefore, you'll be apt to say, are pride and self-love. Why, yes, and so they are, where they are a part of a person's habit. But, oh my Lucy! will not a *native* humility render this pride, whose genuine offspring are resentment and ill-will, absolutely unnecessary, and procure for us, unmingled with mortification, the esteem we wish for in the hearts of the worthy?

As to the rest of my new acquaintance in town, who, till I knew this admirable sister and brother, took up so much of my paper, though some of them are doubtless very worthy; adieu—That is to say, as *chosen* subjects—Adieu! says your HARRIET BYRON.

—o—

LETTER XXXVIII.

Miss Byron to Miss Selby.

Saturday Night.

LORD have mercy upon me, my dear!—What shall I do? —The vile Sir Hargrave has sent a challenge to Sir Charles! —What may be the event!—Oh that I had not come to London!—This is a copy of the letter that communicates it. It is from that Bagenhall. But this is a copy of the letter —I will endeavour to transcribe it.—But, no, I cannot—My Sally shall write it over. Lord bless me, what shall I do?

—o—

To Miss Byron.

Cavendish Square, February 25.

MADAM,—You might easily believe, that the affair betwixt Sir Hargrave Pollexfen and Sir Charles Grandison could not,

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after so violent an insult as the former received from the latter, end without consequences.

By all that's sacred, Sir Hargrave knows not that I write.

There is but one way that I can think of to prevent bloodshed; and that, madam, seems to be in your own power.

Sir Hargrave insists upon it, that he meant you nothing but honour. You know the use or abuse of the power he had obtained over you. If he behaved with indecency, he tells me not the truth.

To make a young lady, whatever were her merit, the wife of a man of near 10,000*l.* a year, and who has declared herself absolutely disengaged in her affections, was not doing dishonour to her, so much as to himself, in the violent measures his love obliged him to take to make her so.

Now, madam, as Sir Charles Grandison was utterly a stranger to you; as Sir Hargrave intended so honourably by you; and as you are not engaged in your affections; if you will consent to be Lady Pollexfen; and if Sir Charles Grandison will ask pardon for his unprovoked knight-errantry; I will not be Sir Hargrave's second in the affair, if he refuse to accept of such satisfaction in full for the violence he sustained.

I solemnly repeat, that Sir Hargrave knows nothing of my writing to you. You may (but I insist upon it, as in confidence to everybody else) consult your cousin Reeves on the subject. Your honour given, that you will in a month's time be Sir Hargrave's, will make me exert all my power with him (and I have reason to think that is not small) to induce him to compromise on those terms.

I went to Sir Charles's house yesterday afternoon with a letter from Sir Hargrave. Sir Charles was just stepping into his chariot to his sister. He opened it; and, with a civility that became his character, told me he was just going with his sister to Colnebrook, to meet dear friends on their return from Scotland: that he should return on Monday; that the pleasure he should have with his long-absent friends, would not permit him to think of the contents till then: but that the writer should not fail of such an answer as a gentleman ought to give.

Now, madam, I was so much charmed with Sir Charles Grandison's fine person and politeness, and his character is so extraordinary, that I thought this interval between this

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night and Monday morning a happy one. And I took it into my head to make the above proposal to you; and I hope you will think it behoves *you*, as much as it does *me*, to prevent the fatal mischief that may otherwise happen to men of their consideration.

I have not the honour of being personally known to you, madam; but my character is too generally established for any one to impute to me any other motives for this my application to you, than those above given. A line left for me at Sir Hargrave's, in Cavendish Square, will come to the hands of, madam, your most obedient humble servant,

JAMES BAGENHALL.

Oh, my dear! what a letter!—Mr. Reeves, Mrs. Reeves, are grieved to the heart. Mr. Reeves says that, if Sir Hargrave insists upon it, Sir Charles is obliged, in honour, to meet him.—Murderous, vile word *honour!* What, at this rate, is honour? The very opposite to duty, goodness, piety, religion; and to everything that is or ought to be sacred among men.

How shall I look Miss Grandison in the face? Miss Grandison will hate me! To be again the occasion of endangering the life of such a brother!

But what do you think?—Lady Betty is of opinion—Mr. Reeves has consulted Lady Betty Williams in confidence—Lady Betty says, that if the matter *can* be prevented—Lord bless me! she says, I *ought* to prevent it!—What! by becoming the wife of such a man as Sir Hargrave! so unmanly, so malicious, so low a wretch!—What does Lady Betty mean?—Yet, were it in my power to save the life of Sir Charles Grandison, and I refused to do it; for selfish reasons refused; for the sake of my worldly happiness; when there are thousands of good wives, who are miserable with bad husbands.—But will not the sacrifice of *my* life be acceptable by this sanguinary man! That, with all my heart, would I make no scruple to lay down. If the wretch will plunge a dagger in my bosom, and take that for satisfaction, I will not hesitate one moment.

But my cousin said, that he was of opinion, that Sir Charles would hardly be brought to ask pardon. How can I doubt, said I, that the vile man, if he may be induced by

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this Bagenhall to compromise on my being his wife, will dispense with that punctilio, and wreak on me, were I to be his unhappy property, his whole unmanly vengeance? Is he not spiteful, mean, malicious?—But, abhorred be the thought of my yielding to be the wife of such a man!—Yet, what is the alternative? Were I to die, that wretched alternative would still take place: his malice to the best of men would rather be whetted than blunted by my irrevocable destiny! Oh, my Lucy! violent as my grief was, dreadful as my apprehensions were, and unmanly as the treatment I met with from the base man, I never was distressed till now!

But should Miss Grandison advise, should she *insist* upon my compliance with the abhorred condition (and has she not a right to insist upon it, for the sake of the safety of her innocent brother?) can I *then* refuse my compliance with it? —Are we not taught that this world is a state of trial, and of mortification? And is not calamity necessary to wean our vain hearts from it? And, if my motive be a motive of justice and gratitude, and to save a life much more valuable to the world than my own; and which, but for me, had not been—Ought I—And yet—Ah! my Lucy, what can I say? —How unhappy! that I cannot consult this dear lady, who has such an interest in a life so precious, as I might have done, had she been in town.

O Lucy! what an answer as this unwelcome, this wicked mediator gives it, was that which the excellent man returned to the delivered challenge—'I am going to meet dear friends 'on their return from Scotland!' What a meeting of joy will be here saddened over, if they know of this shocking challenge! and how can this noble heart overflow with pleasure on this joyful occasion, as it would otherwise have done, with such an important event in suspense, that may make it the last meeting which this affectionate and most worthy of families will ever know! How near may be the life of this dear brother to a period, when he congratulates the safe arrival of his brother and sister! And who can bear to think of seeing, ere one week is over-past, the now rejoicing and harmonious family, clad in mourning for the first of brothers, and first of men? and I, my Lucy, I, the wretched Harriet Byron, to be the cause of all!

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And could the true hero say, 'That the pleasure he should 'have on meeting his long-absent friends, would not permit 'him to think of the contents of such a letter till Monday; 'but that then the writer should not fail of such an answer '—as a gentleman ought to give?'—O my dear Sir Charles! [on this occasion he is, and ought to be, very dear to me,] how I dread the answer which vile custom, and false honour, will oblige you, as a gentleman, to give! And is there no way with honour to avoid giving such an answer, as distracts me to be told (as Mr. Reeves tells me) *must* be given, if I, your Harriet, interpose not, to the sacrifice of all my happiness in this life?

But, Mr Reeves asks, may not this Bagenhall, though he says Sir Hargrave knows nothing of his writing, have written in concert with him?—What if he has, does not the condition remain? and will not the resentment, on the refusal, take place?—And is not the challenge delivered into Sir Charles's hands? And has he not declared, that he will send an answer to it on Monday? This is carrying the matter beyond contrivance, or stratagem. Sir Charles, so challenged, will not let the challenger come off so *easily*. He cannot, in real honour, now make proposals for qualifying; or accept of them, if made to him. And is not Monday the next day but one?—Only *that* day between, for which I have been preparing my grateful heart to return my silent praises to the Almighty, in the place dedicated to His honour, for so signal a deliverance! and now is my safety to be owing, as it may happen, to a much better person's destruction!

I was obliged to lay down my pen.—See how the blistered paper—It is too late to send away this letter: if it were not, it would be barbarous to torment you with it, while the dreadful suspense holds.

—o—

Sunday Morning.

I AM unable to write on in the manner I used to do. Not a moment all the night past did I close my eyes: How they are swelled with weeping! I am preparing, however, to go to church: there will I renew my fervent prayers, that my

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grateful thanksgiving for the past deliverance may be blessed to me in the future event!

Mr. Reeves thinks that no step ought to be, or can be, taken in this shocking affair, till Sir Charles returns, or Miss Grandison can be consulted. He has taken measures to know every motion of the vile Sir Hargrave.

Lord bless me, my dear! the man has lost three of his fore-teeth! A man so vain of his person! Oh, how must he be exasperated!

Mr. Reeves also will be informed of Sir Charles's arrival the moment he comes to town. He has private information, that the furious Sir Hargrave has with him a man skilled in the science of offence, with whom he is practising—Oh, my dear, how this distracts me!

For Mr. Reeves or me to answer this Bagenhall, Mr. Reeves says, is not to be thought of, as he is a wicked man, and was not likely to have written the alarming letter from good principles. I once, indeed, proposed to write—I knew not what to do, what to propose.—Can you write, said Mr. Reeves, and promise or give hope to Sir Hargrave?

Oh no, no, answered I.

If you could, it is my opinion, that Sir Charles and his sister would both despise you, however self-denying and laudable your motive might be.

—o—

LETTER XXXIX.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Monday Morning, February 27.

WHAT a dreadful day was yesterday to me; and what a still worse night had I, if possible, than the former! My prayers, I doubt, cannot be heard, since they have not that affiance with them that they used to be attended with. How happy was I before I came to London! I cannot write: I cannot do anything. Mr. Reeves is just informed, that Sir Charles and Lord L—— and the two sisters arrived in town late last night. Oh, my Lucy, to return such an answer, I doubt, as Sir Charles thinks a gentleman ought to send. Good Heaven! how will this day end?

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Eight o'clock.

I have received this moment the following billet:—

My dear Harriet,—Prepare yourself for a new admirer: My sister L—— and I are resolved to breakfast with you, unless you forbid us by the bearer. If we find you to have made an attempt to alter your usual morning appearance, we shall suspect you of a desire to triumph over us in the consciousness of your superior graces. It is a sudden resolution. You should have had otherwise notice last night; and yet it was late before we came to town. Have you been good? Are you quite recovered? But in half an hour I hope to ask you an hundred thousand questions.

Compliments to our cousins. Ch. Gr.

Here is a sweet, sprightly billet. Miss Grandison cannot know, the countess cannot know, anything of the dreadful affair, that has given to my countenance, and I am sure will continue on it, an appearance, that, did I not always dress when I arose for the morning, would make me regardless of *that* Miss Grandison hints at.

What joy, at another time, would the honour of this visit have given us! But, even now, we have a melancholy pleasure in it: just such a one as the sorrowing friends of the desperate sick experience, on the coming in of a long-expected physician, although they are in a manner hopeless of his success. But a coach stops——

I ran to the dining-room window. Oh, my dear! it is a coach! but only the two ladies! Good God!—Sir Charles at this moment, at this moment, my boding heart tells me——

Twelve o'clock.

My heart is a little lighter: yet not unapprehensive—Take my narrative in course, as I shall endeavour to give you the particulars of everything that passed in the last more than agreeable three hours.

I had just got down into the great parlour before the ladies entered. Mr. Reeves waited on them at their coach. He handed in the countess. Miss Grandison, in a charming

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humour, entered with them. There, Lady L——, first know our cousin Reeves, said she——

The countess, after saluting Mrs. Reeves, turned to me—There, Lady L——, said Miss Grandison, that's the girl! that's our Harriet!—Her ladyship saluted me—But how now! said Miss Grandison, looking earnestly in my face. How now, Harriet!—Excuse me, Lady L—— (taking my hand), I must reckon with this girl; leading me to the window—How now, Harriet!—Those eyes!—Mr. Reeves, cousin, Mrs. Reeves!—What's to do here!

Lively and ever-amiable Miss Grandison, thought I, how will, by and by, all this sweet sunshine in your countenance be shut in!

Come, come, I *will* know, proceeded she, making me sit down, and taking my hand as she sat by me, her fan in the other hand; I *will* know the whole of the matter.—That's my dear, for I tried to smile—An April eye—Would to Heaven the month was come which my Harriet's eye anticipates!

I sighed. Well, but why that heavy sigh? said she.—Our grandmother Shirley——

I hope, madam, is very well.

Our aunt Selby? Our uncle Selby? Our Lucy?

All well, I hope.

What a deuce ails the girl then? Take care I don't have cause to beat you?—Have any of your fellows hanged themselves?—and are you concerned they did not sooner find the rope?—But come, we will know all by and by.

Charlotte, said the countess, approaching me [I stood up], you oppress our new sister: I wish, my dear, you would borrow a few of our younger sister's blushes. Let me take you out of this lively girl's hands: I have much ado to keep her down, though I am her elder sister. Nobody but my brother can manage her.

Miss Grandison, madam, is all goodness.

We have been all disturbed, said Mrs. Reeves [I was glad to be helped out], in the fear that Sir Hargrave Pollexfen——

O madam! he dare not; he will not:—he'll be glad to be quiet, if you'll let him, said the countess.

It was plain they knew nothing of the challenge.

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You have not heard anything particular, asked Miss Grandison, of Sir Hargrave?

I hope your *brother*, madam, has not, answered I.

Not a word, I daresay.

You must believe, ladies, said I, that I must be greatly affected, were anything likely to happen to my deliverer; as all must have been laid at my door. Such a family harmony to be interrupted——

Come, said Miss Grandison, this is very good of you: this is like a sister: but I hope my brother will be here by and by.

And Lord L——, added the obliging countess, wants to see you, my dear. Come, my love, if Charlotte is naught, he will make a party against her; and she shall be but my second best sister. I hope my lord and Sir Charles will come together, if they can but shake off wicked Everard, as we call a kinsman, whom Sir Charles has no mind to introduce to you, without your leave.

But we'll not stay breakfast for them, said Miss Grandison: they were not certain; and *desired* we would not.—Come, come, get us some breakfast; Lady L—— has been up before her hour; and I have told you, Harriet, that I am an early riser. I don't choose to eat my gloves—But I must do something to divert my hunger: and, stepping to the harpsichord, she touched the keys in such a manner as showed she could make them speak what language she pleased.

I attended to her charming finger: so did every one. But breakfast coming in—No, but I won't, said she, anticipating our requests; and continuing the air by her voice, ran to the table: Hang ceremony, said she, sitting down first; let slower souls compliment: and, taking some muffin, I'll have breakfasted before these *pray, madams,* and *pray, my dears,* are seated.

Mad girl! Lady L—— called her. These, Mrs. Reeves, are always her airs with us: but I thought she would have been restrained by the example of her sister Harriet. We have utterly spoiled the girl by our fond indulgence. But, Charlotte, is a good heart to be *everywhere* pleaded for a whimsical head?

Who sees not the elder sister in that speech? replied Miss Grandison: but I am the most generous creature breathing;

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yet nobody finds it out. For why do I assume these silly airs, but to make *you*, Lady L——, shine at my expense?

Still, Lucy, the contents of that Bagenhall's letter hung heavy at my heart. But I could not be sure but Sir Charles had his reasons for concealing the matter from his sisters, I knew not how to enter directly into the subject: But, thought I, cannot I fish something out for the quiet of my own heart; and leave to Sir Charles's discretion the manner of his revealing the matter to his sisters, or otherwise?

Did your ladyship, said I to Lady L——, arrive on Saturday [I knew not how to begin] at the hospitable house at Colnebrook, my asylum?

I did: and shall have a greater value for that house than ever I had before, for its having afforded a shelter to so valuable a lady.

You have been told, ladies, I suppose, of that Wilson's letter to Sir Charles?

We have: and rejoice to find that so deep a plot was so happily frustrated.

His postscript gives me concern.

What were the contents of it?

That Sir Hargrave breathed nothing but revenge.

Sir Charles told us nothing of that: but it is not unlikely that a man so greatly disappointed should rave and threaten. I am told that he is still, either by shame or illness, confined to his chamber.

At that moment a chariot stopt at the door: and instantly, It is Lord L——, and Sir Charles with him, said Miss Grandison.

I dared not to trust myself with my joy. I hurried out at one of the doors, as if I had forgot something, as they entered at the other. I rushed into the back parlour—Thank God! thank God! said I—My gratitude was too strong for my heart, I thought I should have fainted.

Do you wonder, Lucy, at my being so much affected, when I had been in such a dreadful suspense, and had formed such terrible ideas of the danger of one of the best of men, all owing to his serving and saving me?

Surprises from joy, I fancy, and where gratitude is the principal spring, are sooner recovered from than surprises

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which raise the more stormy passions. Mrs. Reeves came in to me: My dear! your withdrawing will be noticed. I was just coming in, said I: and so I was. I went in.

Sir Charles bowed low to me: so did my lord. Permit me, madam, said Sir Charles, to present Lord L—— to you: he is our brother—Our late found sister Harriet, my lord.

Yes, but Sir Charles, said Miss Grandison, Miss Byron, and Mr. and Mrs. Reeves, have been tormenting themselves about a postscript to that footman's letter. You told not us of that postscript.]

Who minds postscripts, Charlotte? Except, indeed, to a lady's letter. One word with you, good Miss Byron; taking my hand, and leading me to the window.

How the fool coloured! I could feel my face glow.

O Lucy! what a consciousness of inferiority fills a mind not ungenerous, when it labours under the sense of obligations it cannot return!

My sister Charlotte, madam, was impatient to present to you her beloved sister. Lady L—— was as impatient to attend you. My Lord L—— was equally desirous to claim the honour of your acquaintance. They insisted upon introducing my lord. I thought it was too precipitate a visit, and might hurt your delicacy, and make Charlotte and me appear, as if we had been ostentatiously boasting of the opportunities that had been thrown into our hands, to do a very common service. I think I see you are hurt. Forgive me, madam, I will follow my own judgment another time. Only be assured of this, that your merits, and not the service, have drawn this visit upon you.

I could not be displeased at this polite address, as it helped me to an excuse for behaving so like a fool, as he might think, since he knew not the cause.

You are very obliging, sir. My Lord and Lady L—— do me great honour. Miss Grandison cannot do anything but what is agreeable to me. In such company, I am but a common person: but my gratitude will never let me look upon your seasonable protection as a common service. I am only anxious for the consequence to yourself. I should have no pretence to the gratitude I speak of, if I did not own that the reported threatenings, and what Wilson writes by

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way of postscript, have given me disturbance, lest your safety should, on my account, be brought into hazard.

Miss Byron speaks like herself: but, whatever were to be the consequences, can you think, madam, that a man of any spirit could have acted otherwise than I did? Would I not have been glad, that any man would have done just the same thing, in favour of my sister Charlotte? Could I behave with greater moderation? I am pleased with myself on looking back; and that I am not always: there shall be no consequence follow, that I am not forced upon in my own necessary defence.

We spoke loud enough to be heard: and Miss Grandison, joining us, said, But pray, brother, tell us if there be grounds to apprehend anything from what the footman writes?

You cannot imagine but Sir Hargrave would bluster and threaten. To lose such a prize, so near as he thought himself to carrying his point, must affect a man of his cast: but are ladies to be troubled with *words?* Men of true courage do not threaten.

Shall I beg one word with you, Sir Charles? said my cousin Reeves.

They withdrew to the back parlour; and there Mr. Reeves, who had the letter of that Bagenhall, showed it to him.

He read it—A very extraordinary letter! said he; and gave it back to him—But pray, what says Miss Byron to it?—is *she* willing to take this step in consideration of my safety?

You may believe, Sir Charles, she is greatly distressed.

As a tender-hearted woman, and as one who thinks already much too highly of what was done, she *may* be distressed: but does she hesitate a moment upon the part she ought to take? does she not despise the writer and the writing?—I thought Miss Byron——

He stopt, it seemed, and spoke and looked warm; the first time, said Mr. Reeves, that I thought Sir Charles, on occasion, passionate.

I wish, Lucy, that he had not stopt. I wish he had said *what* he thought, Miss Byron. I own to you, that it would go to my heart, if I knew that Sir Charles Grandison thought me a mean creature.

You must think, Sir Charles, that Miss Byron——

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Pray, Mr. Reeves, forgive me for interrupting you; what steps have been taken upon this letter?

None, sir.

It has *not* been honoured with notice; not with the *least* notice?

It had not.

And could it be supposed by these mean men (all men are mean, Mr. Reeves, who can be *premeditatedly* guilty of a baseness), that I would be thought to ask pardon for my part in this affair? No man, Mr. Reeves, would be more ready than myself to ask pardon, even of my inferior, had I done a wrong thing: but never should a *prince* make me stoop to disavow a right one.

But, Sir Charles, let me ask you, has Sir Hargrave challenged you? Did this Bagenhall bring you a letter?

Sir Hargrave has: Bagenhall did: but what of that, Mr. Reeves? I promised an answer on Monday. I would not so much as think of setting pen to paper on such an account, to interrupt for a moment the happiness I had hoped to receive in the meeting of a sister and her lord, so dear to me. An answer I have accordingly sent him this day.

You *have* sent him an answer, sir!—I am in great apprehensions——

You have no reasons, Mr. Reeves, I do assure you. But let not my sisters, nor Lord L——, know of this matter. Why should I, who cannot have a moment's uneasiness upon it, for *my own* sake, have the needless fears and apprehensions of persons to whom I wish to give nothing but pleasure, to contend with? An imaginary distress, to those who think it more than imaginary, is a real one: and I cannot bear to see my friends unhappy.

Have you accepted, sir—Have you——

I have been too much engaged, Mr. Reeves, in such causes as this: I never drew my sword but in my own defence, and when no other means could defend me. I never could bear a designed insult. I am naturally passionate. You know not the pains it has cost me to keep my passion under: but I have suffered too much in my after-regret, when I have been hurried away by it, not to endeavour to restrain its first sallies.

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I hope, sir, you will not meet——

I will not meet any man, Mr. Reeves, as a duellist: I am not so much a coward, as to be afraid of being branded for one. I hope my spirit is in general too well known for any one to insult me on such an imputation. Forgive the seeming vanity, Mr. Reeves: but I live not to the world: I live to myself; to the monitor within me.

Mr. Reeves applauded him with his hands and eyes; but could not in words. The *heart* spoke these last words, said my cousin. How did his face seem to shine in my eyes!

There are many bad customs, Mr. Reeves, that I grieve for: but for none so much as this of premeditated duelling. Where is the magnanimity of the man that cannot get above the vulgar breath? How many fatherless, brotherless, sonless families have mourned all their lives the unhappy resort to this dreadful practice! A man who defies his fellow-creature into the field, in a private quarrel, must first defy his God; and what are his *hopes*, but to be a murderer; to do an irreparable injury to the innocent family and dependents of the murdered? But since you have been let into the matter so far, by the unaccountable letter you let me see, I will show you Sir Hargrave's to me.—This is it, pulling it out of his pocket-book.

You did well, Sir Charles Grandison, to leave your name. My scoundrels were too far off their master to inform themselves by the common symbols, who the person was that insulted an innocent man (as to *him* innocent, however) on the highway. You *expected* to hear from me, it is evident; and you should have heard before now, had I been able, from the effects of the unmanly surprise you took advantage of, to leave my chamber. I demand from you the satisfaction due to a gentleman. The time your own; provided it exceed not next Wednesday; which will give you opportunity, I suppose, to settle your affairs; but the sooner the better. The place, if you have no objection, Kensington Gravel-pits. I will bring pistols for your choice; or you may for mine, which you will. The rest may be left to my worthy friend Mr. Bagenhall, who is so kind as to carry you this, on my

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part; and to some one whom you shall pitch upon, on yours.—Till when, I am your humble servant,

HARGRAVE POLLEXFEN.

Saturday.

I have a copy of my answer somewhere—Here it is. You will wonder perhaps, Mr. Reeves, on such a subject as this, to find it a long one. Had Sir Hargrave known me better than he does, six lines might have been sufficient.

SIR,—Mr. Bagenhall gave me yours on Saturday last, just as I was stepping into my chariot to go out of town. Neither the general contents, nor the time mentioned in it, made it necessary for me to alter my measures. My sister was already in the chariot. I had not done well to make a woman uneasy. I have many friends; and I have great *pleasure* in promoting *theirs*. I promised an answer on Monday.

My answer is this—I have ever refused (and the occasion has happened too often) to draw my sword upon a set and formal challenge. Yet I have reason to think, from the skill I pretend to have in the weapons, that in declining to do so, I consult my conscience rather than my safety.

Have you any friends, Sir Hargrave? Do they love you? Do you love them? Are you desirous of life for their sakes? for your own?—Have you enemies to whom your untimely end would give pleasure?—Let these considerations weigh with you: they do, and always did, with me. I am cool: you cannot be so. The cool person, on such an occasion as this, should put the warm one on thinking: this, however, as you please.

But one more question let me ask you—If you think I have injured you, is it prudent to give me a chance, were it *but* a chance, to do you a still greater injury?

You were engaged in an unlawful enterprise. If you would not have done by me in the same situation, what I did by you, you are not, let me tell you, Sir Hargrave, the man of honour, that a man of honour should be solicitous to put upon a foot with himself.

I took not an unmanly advantage of you, Sir Hargrave: you drew upon me: I drew not in return. You had a dis-

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advantage in not quitting your chariot; after the lunge you made at me, you may be thankful that I made not use of it.

I should not have been sorry, had I been able to give the lady the protection she claimed, with less hurt to yourself. For I could have no malice in what I did: although I had, and have still, a just abhorrence of the violence you were guilty of to a helpless woman; and who, I have found since, merited better treatment from you; and indeed merits the best from all the world; and whose life was endangered by the violence.

I write a long letter, because I propose *only* to write. Pardon me for repeating, that the men who have acted as you and I have acted, as well with regard to the lady as to *each other*, cannot, were their principles such as would permit them to meet, meet upon a foot.

Let any man insult me upon my refusal, and put me upon my defence, and he shall find that numbers to my single arm shall not intimidate me. Yet, even in *that* case, I would much rather choose to clear myself of them as a man of honour should wish to do, than either to kill or main any man. My life is not my own: much less is another man's mine. Him who thinks differently from me, I can despise as heartily as he can despise me. And if such a one imagines that he has a title to my life, let him take it: but it must be in my own way, not in his.

In a word, if any man has aught against me, and will not apply for redress to the laws of his country, my goings out, and comings in, are always known; and I am any hour of the day to be found, or met with, wherever I have a proper call. My sword is a sword of defence, not of offence. A pistol I only carry on the road, to terrify robbers: and I have found a less dangerous weapon sometimes sufficient to repel a sudden insult. And now, if Sir Hargrave Pollexfen be wise, he will think himself obliged for this not unfriendly expostulation, or whatever he pleases to call it, to his most humble servant, CHARLES GRANDISON.

Monday.

Mr. Reeves besought Sir Charles to let him shew me these letters. You may, Mr. Reeves, said he; since I intend not to meet Sir Hargrave in the way he prescribes.

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As I asked not leave, my Lucy, to take copies of them, I beg they may not be seen out of the venerable circle.

I know I need not say how much I am pleased with the contents of the letter: I doubt not but you all will be equally so: yet, as Sir Charles himself expects not that Sir Hargrave will rest the matter here; and indeed says he cannot, consistently with the vulgar notions of honour; do you think I can be easy, as all this is to be placed to my account?

But it is evident that Sir Charles *is*. He is governed by another set of principles than those of false honour; and shews, what his sister says to be true, that he regards first his duty, and then what is called honour. How does the knowledge of these his excellences raise him in my mind! Indeed, Lucy, I seem sometimes to feel, as if my gratitude had raised a throne for him in my heart; but yet as for a near friend, as a beloved brother only. My reverence for him is too great—Assure yourself, my dear, that this reverence will always keep me right.

Sir Charles and Mr. Reeves returning into company, the conversation took a general turn. But, oppressed with obligations as I am, I could not be lively. My heart, as Miss Grandison says, is, I believe, a proud one. And when I thought of what might still happen (who knows, but from assassination, in resentment of some very spirited strokes in Sir Charles's letter, as well as from the disgrace the wretch must carry in his face to the grave?) I could not but look upon this fine man, who seemed to possess his own soul in peace, sometimes with concern, and even with tender grief, on supposing, that now, lively and happy as he seemed to be, and the joy of all his friends, he might possibly, and perhaps in a few hours—How can I put down my horrid thoughts!

At other times, indeed, I cast an eye of some pleasure on him (when he looked another way), on thinking him the only man on earth, to whom, in such distress, I could have wished to owe the obligations I am under to him. His modest merit, thought I, will not make one uneasy: he thinks the protection afforded but a common protection. He is accustomed to do great and generous things. I might have been obliged to a man whose fortune might have made it convenient for him to hope such advantages from the risk

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he run for me, as prudence would have made objections to comply with, not a little embarrassing to my gratitude.

But here my heart is left free. And oh! thought I, now and then, as I looked upon him, Sir Charles Grandison is a man with whom I would not *wish* to be in love. I, to have so many rivals! he, to be so much admired! Women ought to stay till they are asked, as Miss Grandison once said; his heart must be proof against those tender sensations, which grow into ardour, and glow, in the bosom of a man pursuing a *first* and *only* love.

I warrant my Lucy, if the truth were known, although Sir Charles has at Canterbury, or at one place or other, his half-score ladies, who would break their hearts if he were to marry, yet he knows not any *one* of them whom he loves better than another. And all but right! All but justice, if they will not stay till they are asked!

Miss Grandison invited Mr. and Mrs. Reeves, and me, to dinner on Wednesday, and for the rest of the day and evening. It was a welcome invitation.

The countess expressed herself pleased with me. Poor and spiritless as was the figure which I made in this whole visit, her prepossession in my favour from Miss Grandison must have been very great and generous.

And will you not, before now, have expected, that I should have brought you acquainted with the persons of Lord and Lady L——, as I am accustomed to give you descriptions of every one to whom I am introduced?

To be sure we have, say you.

Well, but my mind has not always been in tune to gratify you. And, upon my word, I am so much humbled with one thing and another, that I have lost all that pertness, I think, which used to give such a liveliness to my heart and alertness to my pen, as made the writing task pleasant to me, because I knew that you all condescended to like the flippant airs of your Harriet.

Lady L—— is a year older than Sir Charles: but has that true female softness and delicacy in her features, which make her perfectly lovely; and she looks to be two or three years younger than she is. She is tall and slender; and enjoys the blessing of health and spirits in a high degree. There

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is something of more dignity and sprightliness in the air and features of Miss Grandison than in those of Lady L——: but there is in those of the latter so much sweetness and complacency, that you are not so much afraid of her as you are of her sister. The one you are sure to love at first sight: the other you will be ready to ask leave to let you love her; and to be ready to promise that you will, if she will spare you: and yet, whether she will or not, you cannot help it.

Lady L—— is such a wife, I imagine, as a good woman should wish to be thought. The behaviour of my lord to her, and of her to my lord, is free, yet respectful; affectionate, but not apishly fond. One sees their love for each other in their eyes. All love-matches are not happy: this was a match of love; and does honour to it. Everybody speaks of Lady L—— with equal affection and respect, as a discreet and prudent woman. Miss Grandison, by her livelier manner, is not so well understood in those lights as she ought to be; and, satisfied with the worthiness of her own heart, is above giving herself concern about what the world thinks of it.

Lord L—— is not handsome; but he is very agreeable. He has the look of an honest, good man; and of a man of understanding. And he is what he looks to be. He is genteel, and has the air of a true British nobleman; one of those, I imagine, that would have been respected by his appearance and manners, in the purest times, a hundred or two years (or how long?) ago.

I am to have the family history of this lord and lady on both sides, and of their loves, their difficulties, and of the obligations they talk of being under to their brother; to whom both my lord and lady behave with love that carries the heart in every word, in every look.

What, my dear, shall we say to this brother? Does he lay everybody that knows him under obligation? And is there no way to be even with him in any one thing? I long to have some intimate conversation with Miss Grandison, by which I shall perhaps find out the art he has of making everybody proud of acknowledging an inferiority to him.

I almost wish I could, while I stay in town, devote half my time to this amiable family; without breaking in upon

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them so much as to be thought impertinent. The other half ought to be with my kind cousins Reeves. I never shall make them amends for the trouble I have given them.

How I long for Wednesday, to see all the family of the Grandisons!—They are all to be there—On several accounts I long for that day: yet this Sir Hargrave——

I have written, my dear, as usual, very unreservedly. I know that I lie more open than ever to my uncle's observations. But if he will not allow for weakness of heart, of head, and for having been frightened out of my wits, and cruelly used; and for further apprehensions; and for the sense I have of obligations that never can be returned; why then I must lie wholly at his mercy—But if he should find *me* to be ever so silly a creature, I hope he will not make his particular conclusions general in disfavour of the sex.

Adieu, my dear Lucy!—And you, adieu all the dear and reverend friends, benefactors, lovers, of your

HARRIET BYRON.

—o—

LETTER XL.

Mrs. Selby to Miss Harriet Byron.

Selby House, February 25.

MY DEAREST HARRIET,—Although we have long ago taken a resolution never to dictate to your choice, yet we could not excuse ourselves, if we did not acquaint you with any proposal that is made to us, on your account, that you might encourage it, or otherwise, as you thought fit.

The dowager Lady D—— wrote me a letter some time ago (as you will see by the date), but insisted, that I should keep the contents a secret in my own bosom, till she gave me leave to reveal it. She has now given me that leave, and requested that I will propose the matter to you. I have since shown, what has passed between her ladyship and me, to your grandmamma, Mr. Selby, and Lucy. They are all silent upon it; for the same reasons that I give you not my opinion; that is to say, till you ask it.

But do we not see, my dearest child, that something has

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happened, within a very few days past, that must distance the hope of every one of your admirers, as they come to be acquainted with the circumstances and situation you are now in? My dear love, you will never be able to resist the impulses of that gratitude which always opened and expanded your worthy heart.

Your uncle's tenderness for you, on such a prospect, has made him suppress his inclination to rally you. He professes to pity you, my dear. While, says he, the sweet girl was vaunting herself, and refusing this man, and dismissing that; and imagining herself out of the reach of the deity, to which, sooner or later, all women bow; I spared her not; but now, that I see she is likely to be over head and ears in the passion, and has so much to be said for her excuse, if she is caught; and as our side must perhaps be the hoping side, the gentleman's the triumphant; I pity her too much for what *may* be the case, to tease her with my anim-adversions; especially after what she has suffered from the vile Sir Hargrave.

By several hints in your letters, it is impossible, my dear, that we *can* be beforehand with your inclinations. Young women in a beginning love are always willing to conceal themselves from themselves; they are desirous to smother the fire, before they will call out for help, till it blazes, and frequently becomes too powerful to be extinguished by *any* help. They will call the passion by another name; as, *gratitude,* suppose: but, my Harriet, gratitude so properly founded as yours is, can be but another name for *love.* The object so worthy, your own heart so worthy, consent of minds must bring it to love on one side; perhaps on both, if the half-score of ladies you have heard of are all of them but *mere moderns.* But that, my dear, is not to be supposed; since worthy hearts find out, and assimilate with, each other. Indeed, those ladies may be such as are captivated with outward figure. A handsome man need not to have the great qualities of a Sir Charles Grandison, to engage the hearts of the generality of our sex. But a good man, and a handsome man, if he has the vivacity that distinguishes Sir Charles, may marry whom he pleases. If we women love a handsome man, for the sake of our eye, we

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must be poor creatures indeed, if we love not good men, for the sake of our hearts.

What makes us apprehensive for you, my Harriet, is this: that we every one of us are in love ourselves with this fine young gentleman. Your uncle has fallen in with Mr. Dawson, an attorney of Nottingham, who acts for Sir Charles in some of his affairs; and gives him such a character, respecting his goodness to his tenants and dependents *only*, as will render credible all that even the fondest love, and warmest gratitude, can say in his praise.

We can hardly tell sometimes how to regret (though your accounts of your sufferings and danger cut us to the heart as we read them) the base attempt of Sir Hargrave. Were all to end as we wish, we should not regret it; but that, my Harriet, is our fear. What will become of me, said your grandmamma, if, at last, the darling of my heart should be entangled in a hopeless passion!

If this is likely to be the case, while the fire I spoke of is but smothering, and while but here and there a spark escapes your struggling efforts to keep it down, resolve, my dear, to throw cold water on it, and quench it quite. And how is this to be done, but by changing your personal friendship with the amiable family into a correspondence by pen and ink, and returning to our longing arms, before the flame gets a-head?

When you are with us, you may either give hope to the worthy Orme, or encourage the proposal I enclose, as you please.

As you are not capable of the mean pride of seeing a number of men in your train, and have always been uneasy at the perseverance of Mr. Fenwick and Mr. Greville—As you have suffered so much from the natural goodness of your heart, on the urgency of that honest man Sir Rowland Meredith in his nephew's favour; and still more from the baseness of that wicked Sir Hargrave—As your good character and lovely person engage you more and more admirers—And, lastly, as it would be the highest comfort that your grandmamma, and your uncle, and I, and all your friends and well-wishers, could know, to see you happily married—we cannot but wish for this pleasure and satisfaction. The sooner you give it to us the better.

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But could there be any hope—You know what I mean—A royal diadem, my dear, would be a despicable thing in the comparison.

Adieu, my best love. You are called upon, in my opinion, to a greater trial than ever yet you knew, of that prudence for which you have hitherto been so much applauded by every one, and particularly by your truly maternal

MARIANNA SELBY.

—o—

LETTER XLI.

From the Countess Dowager of D—— to Mrs. Selby.

[Enclosed in the preceding.]

January 23.

GIVE me leave, madam, to address myself to you, though personally unknown, on a very particular occasion; and, at the same time, to beg of you to keep secret, even from Mr. Selby, and the party to be named as still *more* immediately concerned in the subject, till I give my consent; as no one creature of my family, not even the Earl of D——, my son, does, or shall from me, till you approve of it.

My lord has just entered into his twenty-fifth year. There are not many better young men among the nobility. His minority gave an opportunity to me and his other trustees to put him in possession, when he came of age, of a very noble and clear estate; which he has not impaired. His person is not to be found fault with. He has learning, and is allowed to have good sense, which every *learned* man has not. His conduct, his discretion, in his travels, procured him respect and reputation abroad. You may make inquiry privately of all these matters.

We are, you must believe, very solicitous to have him happily married. He is far from being an undutiful son. Indeed he was *always* dutiful. A dutiful son gives very promising hopes of making a good husband. He assures me that his affections are disengaged, and that he will pay the most particular regard to my recommendation.

I have cast about for a suitable wife for him. I look farther than to the *person* of a woman; though my lord

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will by no means have beauty left out in the qualifications of a wife. I look to the family to whom a lady owes her education and training up. Quality, however, I stand not upon. A man of quality, you know, confers quality on his wife. An ancient and good gentleman's family is all I am solicitous about in this respect. In this light, yours, madam, on all sides, and for many descents, is unexceptionable. I have a desire, if all things shall be found to be mutually agreeable, to be related to it: and your character, as the young lady has been brought up under your eye, is a great inducement with me.

Your niece Byron's beauty, and merit, as well as sweetness of temper, are talked of by everybody. Not a day passes but we hear of her to her great advantage. Now, madam, will you be pleased to answer me one question, with that explicitness which the importance of the case, and my own intended explicitness to you, may require from woman to woman; especially, as I ask it of you in confidence?

Are, then, Miss Byron's affections absolutely disengaged? We are very nice, and must not doubt in this matter.

This is the only question I will ask at present. If this can be answered as I wish, others, in a treaty of this important nature, will come into consideration on both sides.

The favour of a line, as soon as it will suit your convenience, will oblige, madam, your most faithful and obedient servant, M—— D——.

—o—

LETTER XLII.

Mrs. Selby to the Countess Dowager of D——.

January 27.

MADAM,—I am greatly obliged to your ladyship for your good opinion of me, and for the honour you do me, and all our family, in the proposed alliance.

I will answer your ladyship's question with the requisite explicitness.

Mr. Greville, Mr. Orme, and Mr. Fenwick, all of this county, have respectively made application to us for our interest, and to Miss Byron for her favour: but hitherto

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without effect; though the terms each proposes might entitle him to consideration.

Miss Byron professes to honour the married state, and one day proposes to make some man happy in it, if it be not his own fault: but declares, that she has not yet seen the man to whom with her hand she can give her heart.

In truth, madam, we are all neutrals on this occasion. We have the highest opinion of her discretion. She has read, she has conversed; and yet there is not in the country a better housewife, or one who would make a more prudent manager in a family. We are all fond of her, even to doting. Were she *not* our child, we should love her for her good qualities, and sweetness of manners, and a frankness that has few examples among young women.

Permit me, madam, to add one thing; about which Miss Byron, in her turn, will be very nice. Your ladyship is pleased to say, that my lord's affections are disengaged. Were his lordship a prince, and hoped to succeed with her, they must not be so, after he had seen and conversed with her. Yet the future happiness, and not pride, would be the consideration with her; for she has that diffidence in her own merits, from which the worthy of both sexes cannot be totally free. This diffidence would increase too much for her happiness, were she to be thought of with indifference by any man on earth, who hoped to be more than indifferent to *her*.

As to other questions, which, as this is answered, your ladyship thinks may come to be asked, I choose, un-asked (having no reserves), to acquaint your ladyship, that Miss Byron has not, in her own power, quite 15,000*l*. She has, it is true, reversionary expectations; but we none of us wish that they should for many years take place; since that must be by the death of Mrs. Shirley, her grandmother, who is equally revered and beloved by all that know her; and whose life is bound up in the happiness of her granddaughter.

I will strictly obey your ladyship in the secrecy enjoined; and am, madam, your ladyship's obliged and faithful humble servant, MARIANNA SELBY.

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LETTER XLIII.

From the Countess Dowager of D—— to Mrs. Selby.

February 23.

I SHOULD sooner have answered yours, had I not waited for the return of my son, who had taken a little journey into Wales, to look into the condition of a small estate he has there; which he finds capable of great improvement; and about which he has given proper orders.

I took the first opportunity to question him in relation to his inclinations of marriage, and whether he had a regard to any particular woman: and having received an answer to my wishes, I mentioned Miss Byron to him, as a young lady that I should think, from the general good character she bore, would make him an excellent wife.

He said, he had heard her much talked of, and always to her advantage. I then showed him, as in confidence, my letter and your answer. There can be, said I (on purpose to try him), but one objection on your part; and that is fortune: 15,000*l.* to a nobleman who is possessed of 12,000*l.* a year, and has been offered four times the portion, may be thought very inadequate. The less to be stood upon, replied he, where the fortune on my side is so considerable. The very answer, my dear Mrs. Selby, that I wished him to make.

I asked him, if I should begin a formal treaty with you upon what he said. He answered, that he had heard from every mouth so much said in the praise of Miss Byron's mind, as well as person, that he desired I would; and that I would directly endeavour to obtain leave for him to visit the young lady.

I proposed it accordingly. I understand, that she is at present in London. I leave it to your choice, madam, and Mrs. Shirley's, and Mr. Selby's (to whom now, as also to Miss Byron, you will be so good as to communicate the affair), whether you will send for her down to receive my lord's visit and mine; or whether we shall wait on her in town.

I propose very high satisfaction to myself, if the young people approve of each other, in an alliance so much to my wishes in every respect. I shall love the Countess of D——

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as well as any of you can do Miss Byron: and as she has not at present a mother, I shall with pleasure supply that tender relation to her, for the sake of so many engaging qualities, as common fame, as well as good Mrs. Selby, says she is mistress of.

You will despatch an answer as to the interview. I am impatient for it. I depend much upon the frankness of the young lady, which you make a part of her agreeable character. And am, madam, your affectionate and faithful humble servant, M—— D——.

—o—

LETTER XLIV.

Miss Byron to Mrs. Selby.

London, February 28.

INDEED, my dear, and ever indulgent aunt Selby, you have given me pain; and yet I am very ungrateful, I believe, to say so: but if I feel the pain (though perhaps I ought not), should I not own it?

What *circumstances*, what *situation*, am I in, madam, that I cannot be mistress of myself? that shall turn my uncle's half-feared, though always agreeable, raillery into *pity* for me?

'Over head and ears in the passion'—'I to be on the 'hoping side; the gentleman on the triumphant'—'It is 'impossible for you, my friends, to be aforehand with my 'inclinations'—'A beginning love to be mentioned, in 'which one is willing to conceal one's self from one's self!' *Fires, flames, blazes*, to follow!—*Gratitude* and *love* to be spoken of as synonymous terms—Ah! my dear aunt, how could you let my uncle write such a letter, and then copy it, and send it to me as yours?

And yet some very tender strokes are in it, that no *man*, that hardly anybody but you among *women*, could write.

But what do you *do*, madam, when you tell your Harriet of your own prepossessions in favour of a man, who, as you thought, had before in my eye too many advantages? Indeed you should have taken care not to let me know, that his great qualities had impressed you all so deeply: and my grandmamma to be so *very* apprehensive too for the *entangled girl!*

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Hopeless passion? said she. *Entangled in a hopeless passion!* Oh let me die before this shall be deserved to be said of your Harriet!

Then again rises to your pen, *smothering and escaped sparks;* and I am desired to hurry myself to get *cold water* to quench the *flame*—Dear, dear madam, what images are here? And applied—To whom?—And by whom?—Have I written anything so *very* blazing?—Surely I have not. But you should not say you will all forgive me, if this be my sad situation. You should not say, how much you are *yourselves, all of you,* in love with this excellent man; and talk of Mr. Dawson, and of what he says of him: but you should have told me, that if I suffer my gratitude to grow into love, you will never forgive me; then should I have had a call of duty to check or control a passion, that you were afraid could not be gratified.

Well, and there is no way left for me, it seems, but to fly for it! To hurry away to Northamptonshire, and either to begin a new treaty with Lord D——, or to give hope to an old lover. Poor Harriet Byron! And is it indeed so bad with thee? And does thy aunt Selby think it is?

But is there no hope, that the man will take *pity* of thee? When he sees thee so sadly *entangled,* will he not vouchsafe to lend an extricating hand?

Oh no!—Too much obliged, as thou already art, how canst thou expect to be farther obliged? Obliged in the highest degree?

But let me try if I cannot play round this bright, this beamy taper, without singeing my wings! I fancy it is not yet *quite* so bad with me! At least, let me stand this one visit of to-morrow: and then if I find reason to think I cannot stand it, I will take the kind advice and fly for it; rather than add another hopeless girl to the half-score that perhaps have been long sighing for this best of men.

But even then, my aunt, that is to say, were I to fly, and take shelter under your protecting wings, I shall not, I hope, think it *absolutely* necessary to light up one flame, in order to extinguish another. I shall always value Mr. Orme as a friend; but indeed I am less than ever inclined to think of him in a nearer light.

As to Lady D——'s proposal, it admits not with me of

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half a thought. You know, my dearest aunt, that I am not yet *rejected* by one with whom you are all in love—But this *seriously* I will own (and yet I hope nothing but my gratitude is engaged, and that indeed is a very powerful tie), that since I have seen and known Sir Charles Grandison, I have not only (as before) an *indifference*, but a *dislike*, to all other men. And I think, if I know my own heart, I had rather converse but an hour in a week with him, and with Miss Grandison, than be the wife of any man I have ever seen or known.

If this should end at last in love, and if I should be *entangled in a hopeless passion*, the object of it would be Sir Charles Grandison: he could not insult me: and mean, as the word *pity* in some cases sounds, I had rather have his pity than the love of any other man.

You will, upon the strength of what I have said, be so good, dear madam, as to let the Countess of D—— know, that I think myself highly obliged to her, for her favourable opinion of me: that she has by it interested all my good wishes in her son's happiness; and that I was always of opinion, that equality of fortune and degree, though not absolutely necessary to matrimonial felicity, was, however, a circumstance not to be slighted: but you, madam, can put my meaning in better, in fitter words, when you are assured, that it *is* my meaning, to give an absolute, though grateful, negative to this proposal. And I do assure you that such *is* my meaning; and that I should despise myself were I capable of keeping one man in suspense, even had I hope of *your* hope, while I was balancing in favour of another.

I believe, madam, I have been a little petulant, and very saucy, in what I have written: but my heart is not at ease: and I am vexed with these men, one after another, when Sir Hargrave has given me a surfeit of them; and only that the bad has brought me into the knowledge of the best, or I could resolve never more to hear a man talk to me, no not for one moment, upon a subject that is become so justly painful to one who never took pleasure in their airy adulation.

I know you will, with your usual goodness, and so will my grandmamma, and so will my uncle Selby, pardon all the imperfections of, dearest madam, your and their ever dutiful

HARRIET BYRON.

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LETTER XLV.

Miss Byron to Miss Selby.

Tuesday Evening, February 28.

MR. REEVES, my dear, is just returned from a visit he made to St. James's Square. I transcribe a paper giving an account of what passed between Mr. Bagenhall and Sir Charles, in relation to the shocking affair which has filled me with so much apprehension; and which Sir Charles, at my cousin's request, allowed him to put in his pocket.

Mr. Bagenhall came to Sir Charles yesterday evening with a message from Sir Hargrave, demanding a meeting with him the next morning, at a particular hour, at Kensington Gravel-pits. Sir Charles took Mr. Bagenhall with him into his study; and, asking him to sit down, Mr. Bagenhall said that he was once concerned in an affair of this nature, which had been very much misrepresented afterwards; and that he had been advised to take a step which Sir Charles might think extraordinary; which was, that he had brought with him a young gentleman, whom he hoped, for Sir Hargrave's satisfaction, as well as to do justice to what should pass between them, Sir Charles would permit to take minutes of their conversation: and that he was in the hall.

Let not a gentleman be left in the hall, said Sir Charles; and, ringing, directed him to be shown into the study to them. Yet, Mr. Bagenhall, said he, I see no occasion for this. Our conversation on the subject you came to talk of *can* be but short.

Were it to hold but two minutes, Sir Charles.

What you please, Mr. Bagenhall.

The young gentleman entered; and pen and ink were set before him. He wrote in shorthand: and read it to the gentlemen; and Sir Charles, as it was to be transcribed for Sir Hargrave, desiring a copy of it, it was sent him the same night.

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A CONFERENCE BETWEEN SIR C. GRANDISON, BART., AND J. BAGENHALL, ESQ.

SIR CH. You have told me, Mr. Bagenhall, Sir Hargrave's demand. Have you seen, sir, the answer I returned to his letter?

MR. B. I have, sir.

SIR CH. And do you think there needs any other, or further?

MR. B. It is not, Sir Charles, such an answer as a gentleman can sit down with.

SIR CH. Do you give that as *your own* opinion, Mr. Bagenhall? or, as Sir Hargrave's?

MR. B. As Sir Hargrave's, sir. And I believe it would be the opinion of every man of honour.

SIR CH. Man of honour, Mr. Bagenhall! A man of honour would not have given the occasion which has brought you and me, sir, into a personal knowledge of each other. I asked the question, supposing there could be but *one* principal in this debate.

MR. B. I beg pardon: I meant not that there should be *two*.

SIR CH. Pray, sir, let me ask you, do you know the particulars of Sir Hargrave's attempt, and of his violence to the lady?

MR. B. Sir Hargrave, I believe, has given me a very exact account of everything. He meant no dishonour to the lady.

SIR CH. He must have a very high opinion of himself, if he thought the *best* he could do for her, would be to do her honour. —Sir, pray put that down—repeating what he had said to the writer, that he might not mistake.

Sir CH. But do you, Mr. Bagenhall, think Sir Hargrave was justifiable, was a man of honour in what he did?

MR. B. I mean not, as I told you, Sir Charles, to make myself a principal in this affair. I pretend not to justify what Sir Hargrave did to the lady.

SIR CH. I hope then you will allow me to refer to my answer to Sir Hargrave's letter. I shall send him no other. I beg your pardon, Mr. Bagenhall, I mean not a disrespect to you.

MR. B. No *other*, Sir Charles!

SIR CH. Since he is to see what this gentleman writes, pray put down, sir, that I say, The answer I have written, is such a one as he ought to be satisfied with: such a one as becomes a man of honour to send, if he thought fit to send *any*; and such a one as a man who has acted as Sir Hargrave acted by a woman of virtue and honour, ought to be thankful for.—Have you written that, sir?

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WRITER. I have, sir.

SIR CH. Write further, if you please; that I say, Sir Hargrave may be very glad, if he hear no more of this affair from the lady's natural friends: that, however, I shall rid him of all apprehensions of that nature; for that I still consider the lady as under my protection, with regard to any consequences that may naturally follow what happened on Hounslow Heath: that I say, I shall neglect no proper call to protect her farther; but that his call upon me to meet him, must be such a one as my own heart can justify; and that it is not my way to obey the insolent summons of any man breathing.—And yet what is this, Mr. Bagenhall, but repeating what I wrote?

MR. B. You are warm, Sir Charles.

SIR CH. Indeed I am not: I am only earnest. As Sir Hargrave is to be shown what passes, I say more than otherwise I should choose to say.

MR. B. Will you name your own time and place, Sir Charles?

SIR CH. To do what?

MR. B. To meet Sir Hargrave.

SIR CH. To do him good—To do good to my bitterest enemy, I would meet him. Let him know, that I wrote a very long letter, because I would discharge my mind of all I thought necessary to say on the occasion.

MR. B. And you have no other answer to return?

SIR CH. Only this—Let Sir Hargrave engage himself in a like unworthy enterprise; and let the lady, as this did, claim my protection; and I will endeavour to give it to her, although Sir Hargrave were surrounded by as many men armed, as he has in his service; that is to say, if a legal redress were not at hand: If it were, I hold it not to be a point of bravery to insult magistracy, and to take upon myself to be my own judge; and, as it might happen, another man's executioner.

MR. B. This is nobly said, Sir Charles: but still Sir Hargrave had not injured *you*, he says. And as I had heard you were a man of an excellent character, and know Sir Hargrave to be a man of courage, I took it into my head, for the prevention of mischief, to make a proposal in writing to the lady, whom Sir Hargrave loves as his own soul; and if she had come into it——

SIR CH. A strange proposal, Mr. Bagenhall. Could you expect anything from it?

MR. B. Why not, Sir Charles? she is disengaged, it seems. I presume, sir, you do not intend to make court to her yourself?

SIR CH. We are insensibly got into a parley, upon a subject that will not bear it, Mr. Bagenhall. Tell Sir Hargrave—or

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write it down from my lips, sir (speaking to the writer), that I wish him to take time to inquire after my character, and after my motives in refusing to meet him on the terms he expects me to see him. Tell him, that I have, before now, shown an insolent man, that I *may be* provoked: but that, when I have been so, I have had the happiness to chastise such a one without murdering him, and without giving any advantage over my own life, to his single arm.

MR. B. This is great talking, Sir Charles.

SIR CH. It is, Mr. Bagenhall. And I should be sorry to have been put upon it, were I not in hope, that it may lead Sir Hargrave to such inquiries as may be for *his* service, as much as for *mine*.

MR. B. I wish that two such spirits were better acquainted with each other, or that Sir Hargrave had not suffered so much as he has done, both in person and mind.

SIR CH. What does all this tend to, Mr. Bagenhall? I look upon you as a gentleman; and the more, for having said, you were solicitous to prevent further mischief, or I should not have said so much to so little purpose. And, once more, I must refer to my letter.

MR. B. I own I admire you for your spirit, sir. But it is amazing to me, that a man of such spirit can refuse to a gentleman the satisfaction which is demanded of him.

SIR CH. It is owing to my having some spirit, that I can, fearless of consequences, refuse what you call satisfaction to Sir Hargrave, and yet be fearless of insult upon my refusal. I consider myself as a mortal man: I can die but once: Once I must die: and, if the cause be such as will justify me to my own heart, I, *for my own sake*, care not whether my life be demanded of me to-morrow, or forty years hence: But, sir (speaking to the writer), let not this, that I have now said, be transcribed from your notes: it may to Sir Hargrave sound ostentatiously. I want not, that anything should be read or shown to him, that would appear like giving consequence to myself, except for Sir Hargrave's own sake.

MR. B. I beg that it may not be spared. If you are capable of acting as you speak; by what I have heard *of* you in the affair on Hounslow Heath; and by what I have heard *from* you in this conversation; and *see* of you; I think you a wonder of a man; and should be glad it were in my power to reconcile you to each other.

SIR CH. I could not hold friendship, Mr. Bagenhall, with a man that has been capable of acting as Sir Hargrave has acted,

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by an innocent and helpless young lady. But I will name the terms on which I can take by the hand, wherever I meet him, a man to whom I can have no malice: These are they, that he lay at the door of mad and violent passion, the illegal attempt he made on the best of women: that he expresses his sorrow for it; and, on his knees, if he pleases (it is no disgrace to the *proudest* man to kneel to an injured lady), beg her pardon; and confess her clemency to be greater than he deserves, if she give it.

MR. B. Good God!—Shall that be transcribed, Sir Charles?

SIR. CH. By all means: and if Sir Hargrave is a man that has in his heart the least spark of true magnanimity, he will gladly embrace the opportunity of acting accordingly. And put down, sir, that sorrow, that contrition, is all the atonement that can be made for a perpetrated evil.

(A faithful Narrative.) HENRY COTES.

February 27.

Does not your heart glow, my Lucy, now you have read (as I suppose you have) this paper? And do not the countenances of every one of my revered friends round you [Pray look] shine with admiration of this excellent man? And yet you all loved him before: and so you think I did. Well I can't help your thoughts!—But I hope I shall not be undone by a *good* man!

You will imagine, that my heart was a little agitated when I came to read Mr. Bagenhall's question, Whether Sir Charles intended to make court to me himself? I am sorry to tell you, Lucy, that I was a little more affected than I wished to be. Indeed, I shall keep a *look-out*, as you call it, upon myself. To say truth, I laid down the paper at that place, and was afraid to read the answer made to it. When I took it up, and read what followed, I might have spared, I saw, my foolish little tremors. See how frank I continue to be: but if you come not to this paragraph before you are aware, you need not read it to my uncle.

Mr. Bagenhall went away so much pleased with Sir Charles (as he owned), that Mr. Reeves encourages me to hope, some way may be found to prevent further mischief. Yet the condition, which Sir Charles has proposed for my forgiving the wretch—Upon my word, my dear, I desire not to see Sir Hargrave either upon his knees, or upon his feet:

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I am sure I could not see him without very violent emotions. His barbarity, his malice, his cruelty, have impressed me strongly: nor can I be glad to see the wretch with his disfigured mouth and lip. His lip, it seems, has been sewed up, and he wears a great black silk patch upon the place.

I can't find that Sir Charles has heard from the exasperated man, since Mr. Bagenhall left him yesterday.

I hope nothing will happen to overcloud to-morrow: I propose to myself as happy a day, as, in the present situation of things, can be given to your

HARRIET BYRON.

—o—

LETTER XLVI.

Miss Harriet Byron to Miss Lucy Selby.

Wednesday Night, March 1.

MR. FOWLER set out yesterday for Gloucestershire, where he has an estate. He proposes to go from thence to Caermarthen, to the worthy Sir Rowland. He paid a visit to Mr. Reeves, and desired him to present to me his best wishes and respects. He declared, that he could not possibly take leave of me, though he doubted not but I would receive him with goodness, as he called it. But it was *that* which cut him to the heart: So kind, and so cruel, he said, he could not bear it.

I hope poor Mr. Fowler will be more happy than I could make him. Methinks I could have been half glad to have seen him before he went: and yet *but* half glad; since, had he shown much concern, I should have been pained.

Take now, my dear, an account of what passed this day in St. James's Square.

There were at Sir Charles Grandison's, besides Lord and Lady L——, the young Lord G——, one of Miss Grandison's humble servants; Mr. Everard Grandison; Miss Emily Jervois, a young lady of about fourteen, a ward of Sir Charles; and Dr. Bartlett, a divine; of whom more by and by.

Sir Charles conducted us into the drawing-room adjoining to the dining-room; where only were his two sisters. They received my cousins and me with looks of love.

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I will tell you, said Sir Charles, your company, before I present them to you. Lord L—— is a good man. I honour him as such; and love him as my sister's husband.

Lady L—— bowed, and looked round her, as if she took pride in her brother's approbation of her lord.

Mr. Everard Grandison, proceeded he, is a sprightly man. He is prepared to admire you, Miss Byron. *You* will not believe, perhaps, half the handsome things he will say to you; but yet, will be the only person who hears them, that will not.

Lord G—— is a modest young man: he is genteel, well-bred; but is so much in love with a certain young lady, that he does not appear with that dignity in her eye [why blushes my Charlotte?] that otherwise, perhaps, he might.

Are not *you*, Sir Charles, a *modest man?*

No comparisons, Charlotte. Where there is a double prepossession; no comparisons!—But Lord G——, Miss Byron, is a good kind of young man. You'll not dislike him, though my sister is pleased to think——

No comparisons, Sir Charles.

That's fair, Charlotte. I will leave Lord G—— to the judgment of Miss Byron. Ladies can better account for the approbation and dislikes of ladies, than we men can.

Dr. Bartlett you'll also see. He is learned, prudent, humble. You'll read his heart in his countenance, the moment he smiles upon you. Your grandpapa, madam, had fine curling silver hair, had he not? The moment I heard that you owed obligation to your grandfather's care and delight in you, I figure to myself, that he was just such a man, habit excepted: Your grandfather was not a clergyman, I think. When I have friends whom I have a strong desire to please, I always endeavour to treat them with Dr. Bartlett's company. He has but one fault; he speaks too little: but were he to speak much, every one else would *wish* to be silent.

My ward, Emily Jervois, is an amiable girl. Her father was a good man; but not happy in his nuptials. He bequeathed to my care, on his deathbed, at Florence, this his only child. My sister loves her. I love her for her own sake, as well as for her father's. She has a great fortune: and I have had the happiness to recover large sums, which her father gave over for lost. He was an Italian merchant; and driven

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out of England by the unhappy temper of his wife. I have had some trouble with her; and, if she be living, expect more.

Unhappy temper of his wife, Sir Charles! You are very mild in your account of one of the most abandoned of women.

Well, but, Charlotte, I am only giving brief hints of Emily's story, to procure for her an interest in Miss Byron's favour, and to make their first acquaintance easy to each other. Emily wants no prepossession in Miss Byron's favour. She will be very ready herself to tell her whole story to Miss Byron. Meantime, let us not say all that is just to say of the *mother,* when we are speaking of the *daughter.*

I stand corrected, Sir Charles.

Emily, madam (turning to me), is not constantly resident with us in town. She is fond of being everywhere with my Charlotte.

And where *you* are, Sir Charles, said Miss Grandison.

Mr. Reeves whispered a question to Sir Charles, which was seconded by my eyes; for I guessed what it was: Whether he had heard anything further of Sir Hargrave?

Don't be anxious, said Sir Charles. All must be well. People, long used to error, don't, without reluctance, submit to new methods of proceeding. All must be well.

Sir Charles, stepping out, brought in with him Miss Jervois. The gentlemen seemed engaged in conversation, said he. But I know the impatience of this young lady to pay her respects to Miss Byron.

He presented her to us: This dear girl is my Emily. Allow me, madam, whenever Miss Grandison shall be absent, to claim for her the benefit of your instruction, and your general countenance, as she shall appear worthy of it.

There are not many men, my Lucy, who can make a compliment to one lady, without robbing, or, at least, depreciating another. How often have you and I observed, that a polite brother is a black swan?

I saluted the young lady, and told her, I should be fond of embracing every opportunity that should offer, to commend myself to her favour.

Miss Emily Jervois is a lovely girl. She is tall, genteel, and has a fine complexion; and, though pitted with the small-pox, is pretty. The sweetness of her manners, as

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expressed in her aspect, gives her great advantage. I was sure, the moment I saw her, that her greatest delight is to please.

She made me two or three pretty compliments, and, had *not* Sir Charles commended her to me, I should have been highly taken with her.

Mr. Grandison entered. Upon my honour, Sir Charles, I can stay no longer, said he: to know that the finest woman in England is under the same roof with me; yet to be so long detained from paying my respects to her—I can't bear it.—And, in a very gallant manner, as he seemed to *intend*, he paid his compliments, first to me, and then to my two cousins:—and whispering, yet loud enough to be heard, to Miss Grandison, swore by his soul, that report fell short of my perfections—and I can't tell what.

Did I not tell you that you would say so, sir? said Miss Grandison.

I did not like the gentleman the better for what I had heard of him; but, perhaps, should have been less indifferent to his compliment, had I not before been acquainted with Mr. Greville, Mr. Fenwick, and Sir Hargrave Pollexfen. The men of this cast, I think, seem all alike. Poor creatures! how from my heart—But, indeed, now that I have the honour to know these two sisters, I despise *myself*.

Sir Charles, addressing himself to my cousins and me, Now, said he, that my cousin Grandison has found an opportunity to introduce himself; and that I have presented my ward to you; we will, if you please, see how Lord L——, Lord G——, and Dr. Bartlett are engaged.

He led my cousin Reeves into the dining-room.

Lord L—— addressed us with great politeness.

After Sir Charles had presented the doctor to my cousins, he respectfully took my hand: Were there fifty ladies here, my good Dr. Bartlett, whom you had never seen before, you would, I am sure, from the character you have had of Miss Byron, be under no difficulty of reading that character in this young lady's face.—Miss Byron, behold, in Dr. Bartlett, another grandfather!

I reverence, said I, good Dr. Bartlett. I borrow Sir Charles's thought: the character he has given you, sir, is

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stamped in your countenance. I should have venerated you wherever I had seen you.

The gentleman has such a truly venerable aspect, my Lucy, I could not help saying this.

Sir Charles's goodness, madam, said he, as it ever did, prevents my wishes. I rejoice to see, and to congratulate a new sister *restored,* as I will call it, in the language of Miss Grandison, to the best of families.

Just then came in a servant, and whispered to Sir Charles: Shew the gentleman, said Sir Charles, into the drawing-room, next the study.

Mr. Grandison came up to me, and said many silly things. I thought them so at that time.

Mr. Reeves soon after was sent for out by Sir Charles. I did not like his looks on his return.

Dinner being ready to be served, and Sir Charles, who was still with the gentleman, summoned to it, he desired we would walk down, and he would wait upon us by the time we were seated.

Some new trouble, thought I, of which I am the cause, I doubt.

Presently came in Sir Charles, unaffectedly smiling and serene.—God bless you, sir! thought I—his looks pleased me better than my cousin's.

But, my dear, there is something going forward that I cannot get out of my cousin. I hoped I should, when I got home. The gentleman, to whom Sir Charles was called out, was certainly that Bagenhall. Mr. Reeves cannot deny that. I guessed it was, by Sir Charles sending in for Mr. Reeves. It must be about me.

We had several charming conversations. Sir Charles was extremely entertaining. So unassuming, so lively, so modest! It was also delightful to see the attention paid to him by the servants as they waited at table. They watched every look of his. I never saw love and reverence so agreeably mingled in servants' faces in my life. And his commands were delivered to them with so much gentleness of voice and aspect, that one could not but conclude, in favour of both, that they were the best of servants to the best of masters.

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Mr. Grandison was very gallant in his speeches to me; but very uncivil with his eyes.

Lord L—— said but little; but what he did say deservedly gained attention.

Everybody reverenced Dr. Bartlett, and was attentive when he spoke; and would, I daresay, on his own account, had not the master of the house, by the regard he paid him, engaged every one's veneration for him. Many of the questions which Sir Charles put to him, as if to inform himself, it was evident he could himself have answered: yet he put them with an air of *teachableness*, if I may so express myself; and received the doctor's answers to them with as much satisfaction as if he were then newly enlightened by them.—Ah, my Lucy! you imagine, I daresay, that this admirable man lost nothing in my eyes, by this his polite condescension. Reserve, and a politeness that had dignity in it, shewed that the fine gentleman and the clergyman were not separated in Dr. Bartlett.—Pity they should be in any of the function!

Sir Charles gave Lord G—— an opportunity to shine, by leading the discourse into circumstances and details, which Lord G—— could best recount. He is a connoisseur in antiquities, and in those parts of *nice* knowledge, as I, a woman, call it, with which the Royal Society here, and the learned and polite of other nations, entertain themselves.

Lord G—— appeared to advantage, as Sir Charles managed it, under the awful eye of Miss Grandison. Upon my word, Lucy, she makes very free with him. I whispered her, that she did—A very Miss Howe, said I.

To a *very* Mr. Hickman, rewhispered she.—But here's the difference: I am not determined to have Lord G——. Miss Howe yielded to her mother's recommendation, and intended to marry Mr. Hickman, even when she used him worst. One time or other (archly continued she the whisper, holding up her spread hand, and with a countenance of admiration) my Lord G—— is to shew us his collection of butterflies, and other gaudy insects: will you make one?——

Of the gaudy insects? whispered I.——

Fie, Harriet!—One of the party, you know, I must mean. Let me tell you, I never saw a collection of these various

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insects, that I did not the more admire the Maker of them, and of all us insects, whatever I thought of the collectors of the minute ones.—Another word with you, Harriet—These little playful studies may do well enough with persons who do not want to be *more* than indifferent to us: but do you think a lover ought to take high delight in the painted wings of a butterfly, when a fine lady has made herself all over Butterfly to attract him?—Eyes off, Sir Charles!—for he looked, though smilingly, yet earnestly, at us, as we whispered behind the countess's chair; who heard what was said, and was pleased with it.

—o—

LETTER XLVII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Thursday Morning, March 2.

I SHOULD have told you that Miss Grandison did the honours of the table; and I will go round it; for I know you expect I should. But I have not yet done with Lord G——. Poor man! he is excessively in love, I see that. Well he may. What man would not with Miss Grandison? Yet is she too superior, I think.

What can a woman do, who is addressed by a man of talents inferior to her own? Must she throw away her talents? Must she hide her light under a bushel, purely to do credit to the man? She cannot pick and choose, as men can. She has only her negative; and, if she is desirous to oblige her friends, not always *that*. Yet it is said, women must not encourage fops and fools. They must encourage men of sense only. And it is *well* said. But what will they do, if their lot be cast among foplings? If the men of sense do not offer themselves? And pray, may I not ask, if the taste of the age, among the men, is not dress, equipage, and foppery? Is the cultivation of the mind any part of their study? The men, in short, are sunk, my dear; and the women but barely swim.

Lord G—— seems a little too finical in his dress. And yet I am told, that Sir Walter Watkyns outdoes him in foppery. What can they mean by it, when Sir Charles Grandi-

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son is before them? *He* scruples not to modernise a little; but then you see, that it is in compliance with the fashion, and to avoid singularity; a fault to which great minds are perhaps too often subject, though *he* is so much above it.

I want to know, methinks, whether Sir Charles is *very* much in earnest in his favour to Lord G—— with regard to Miss Grandison. I doubt not, if he be, but he has good reasons for it.

Were this vile Sir Hargrave out of my head, I could satisfy myself about twenty and twenty things, that now and then I want to know.

Miss Jervois behaved very discreetly. With what pleasure did she hang on every word that fell from the lips of her guardian! I thought more than once of Swift's Cadenus and Vanessa. Poor girl! how I should pity her, were she insensibly to suffer her gratitude to lead her to be in love with her benefactor! Indeed, I pity everybody who is hopelessly in love.

Now don't shake your head, my uncle! Did I not always pity Mr. Orme and Mr. Fowler?—You know I did, Lucy.

Miss Jervois had a smile ready for every one; but it was not an implicit, a childish smile. It had distinction in it; and shewed intelligence. Upon the whole, she said little; and heard all that was said with attention: and hence I pronounce her a very discreet young lady.

But I thought to have done with the *men* first; and here is Mr. Grandison hardly mentioned; who yet, in his own opinion, was not the last of the men at table.

Mr. Grandison is a man of a middling stature; not handsome in my eyes; but so near being handsome, that he may be excused, when one knows him, for thinking himself so; because he is liable to make greater mistakes than that.

He dresses very gaily too. He is at the *head* of the fashion, as it seems, he thinks; but, however, is one of the *first* in it, be it what it will. He is a great frequenter of the drawing-room; of all manner of public spectacles: a leader of the taste at a new play, or opera. He dances, he sings, he laughs; and values himself on all three qualifications: and yet certainly has sense; but is not likely to improve it much; since he seems to be so much afraid of suffering in the consequence

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he thinks himself of, that whenever Sir Charles applies himself to him, upon any of his levities, though but by the eye, his consciousness, however mild the look, makes him shew an uneasiness at the instant: he reddens, sits in pain; calls for favour by his eyes and his quivering lips; and has, notwithstanding, a smile ready to turn into a laugh, in order to lessen his own sensibility, should he be likely to suffer in the opinion of the company: but every motion shews his consciousness of inferiority to the man, of whose smiles or animadversions he is so very apprehensive.

What a captious, what a supercilious husband, to a woman who should happen to have a stronger mind than his, would Mr. Grandison make! But he values himself upon his having preserved his liberty.

I believe there are more bachelors now in England by many thousands, than were a few years ago: and probably, the numbers of them (and of single women, of course) will every year increase. The luxury of the age will account a good deal for this; and the turn our sex take in *un*-domesticating themselves, for a good deal more. But let not those worthy young women, who may think themselves destined to a single life, repine overmuch at their lot; since, possibly, if they have had no lovers, or having had one, two, or three, have not found a husband, they have had rather a miss than a loss, as men go. And let me here add, that I think, as matters stand in this age, or indeed ever did stand, that those women who have joined with the men in their insolent ridicule of old maids, ought never to be forgiven: no, though Miss Grandison should be one of the ridiculers. An old maid *may be* an odious character, if they will tell us, that the bad qualities of the persons, not the maiden state, are what they mean to expose: but then they must allow, that there are old maids of twenty; and even that there are widows and wives of all ages and complexions, who, in the abusive sense of the words, are as much old maids as the most particular of that class of females.

But a word or two more concerning Mr. Grandison.

He is about thirty-two. He has had the *glory* of ruining two or three women. Sir Charles has *restored* him to a sense of shame [all men, I hope, are born with it]; which a few

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months ago he had got above. And he does not now entertain ladies with instances of the frailty of individuals of their sex; which many are too apt, encouragingly, to smile at: when, I am very much mistaken, if every woman would not find her account, if she wishes *herself* to be thought well of, in discouraging every reflection that may have a tendency to debase or expose the sex in general. How can a man be suffered to boast of his vileness to one woman in the presence of another, without a rebuke, that should put it to the proof, whether the boaster was or was not past blushing!

Mr. Grandison is thought to have hurt his fortune, which was very considerable, by his free living, and an itch of gaming; to cure him of which, Sir Charles encourages him to give him his company at all opportunities. He certainly has understanding enough to know how to value the favour; for he owns to Miss Grandison, that he both loves and fears him; and now and then tells her, that he would give the world, if he had it, to be able to be just what Sir Charles is! Good God! at other times he has broke out, what an odious creature is a rake! How I hate myself when I contemplate the excellences of this divine brother of yours!

I shall say nothing of Sir Charles in this place. You, I know, my Lucy, will admire me for my forbearance.

Lady L—— and Miss Grandison were the Graces of the table. So lively, so sensible, so frank, so polite, so good-humoured, what honour do they and their brother reflect back on the memory of their mother! Lady Grandison, it seems, was an excellent woman. Sir Thomas was not, I have heard, quite unexceptionable. How useful, if so, are the women in the greater, as well as in the lesser, parts of domestic duty, where they *perform* their duty! And what have those, who do not, to answer for, to GOD, to their children, and even to their whole sex, for the contempts they bring upon it by their uselessness, and perhaps extravagance; since, if the human mind is not actively good, it will generally be actively evil.

Dr. Bartlett I have already spoken of. How did he enliven the conversation, whenever he bore a part in it! So happy an elocution, so clear, so just, so solid, his reasoning! I wish I could remember every word he said.

Sir Charles observed to us, before we *saw* him, that he was

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not forward to speak: but, as I hinted, he threw the occasion in his way, on purpose to draw him out: and at such times, what he said was easy, free, and unaffected: and whenever a subject was concluded, he had done with it. His modesty, in short, made him always follow rather than lead a subject, as he very well might do, be it what it would.

I was charmed with the Brachman's prayer; which he, occasionally, gave us, on the ancient Persians being talked of.

Looking up to the rising sun, which it was supposed they worshipped, these were the words of the Brachman:

'O THOU (meaning the ALMIGHTY) by whom *Thou* (meaning the sun) art enlightened, illuminate my mind, that my actions may be agreeable to THY Will!'

And this I will think of, my Lucy, as often as my early hour, for the future, shall be irradiated by that glorious orb.

Everybody was pleased with Mr. and Mrs. Reeves. Their modesty, good sense, and amiable tempers, and the kind, yet not ostentatious regard which they expressed to each other (a regard so creditable to the married state), cause them to be always treated and spoken of with distinction.

But I believe, as I am in a scribbling vein, I must give you the particulars of one conversation; in which farther honour was done to Dr. Bartlett.

After dinner, the countess, drawing me on one side, by both my hands, said: Well, our other sister, our new found sister, let me know how you like us; I am in pain lest you should not love us as well as you do *our* Northamptonshire relations.

You overcome me, madam, with your goodness.

Miss Grandison then coming towards us, Dear Miss Grandison, said I, help me to words——

No, indeed, I'll help you to nothing. I am jealous. Lady L——, don't think to rob me of my Harriet's preferable love, as you have of Sir Charles's. I *will* be best sister here. But what was your subject?—Yet I will answer my own question. Some pretty compliment, I suppose; women to women. Women hunger and thirst after compliments. Rather than be without them, if no men are at hand to flatter us, we love to say handsome things to one another; and so teach the men to find us out.

You need not be *jealous*, Charlotte, said the countess: you

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may be *sure.* This saucy girl, Miss Byron, is ever frustrating her own pretensions. Can flattery, Charlotte, say what we will, have place *here?*—But tell me, Miss Byron, how you like Dr. Bartlett?

Ay, tell us, Harriet, said Miss Grandison, how you like Dr. Bartlett? Pray, Lady L——, don't anticipate me: I propose to give our new sister the history of us all: and is not Dr. Bartlett one of *us!* She has already given me the history of all her friends, and of herself: and I have communicated to you, like a good sister, all she has told me.

I considered Dr. Bartlett, I said, as a saint; and, at the same time, as a man of true politeness.

He is indeed, said the countess, all that is worthy and amiable in man. Don't you see how Sir Charles admires him?

Pray, Lady L——, keep clear of my province. Here is Sir Charles. He will not let us break into parties.

Sir Charles heard this last sentence—Yet I wonder not, said he, joining us, that three such women get together: goodness to goodness is a natural attraction. We men, however, will not be excluded.—Dr. Bartlett, if you please——

The doctor approached in a most graceful manner—Let me again, Miss Byron, present Dr. Bartlett to you, as a man that is an honour to his cloth; and that is the same thing, as if I said, to human nature [the good man bowed in silence]; and Miss Byron to you, my good doctor (taking my hand), as a lady most worthy your distinguished regard.

You do me too much honour, sir, said I. I shall hope, good Dr. Bartlett, by your instructions, to be enabled to deserve such a recommendation.

My dear Harriet, said the countess, snatching my other hand, you are a *good* girl; and that is more to your honour than beauty.

Be quiet, Lady L——, said Miss Grandison.

Mr. Grandison came up—What? Is there not another hand for me?

I was vexed at his interruption. It prevented Dr. Bartlett from saying something that his lips were opening to speak with a smile of benignity.

How the world, said Sir Charles, smiling, will push itself in! *Heart,* not *hand,* my dear Mr. Grandison, was the subject.

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Whenever you, Sir Charles, and the doctor, and these ladies, are got together, I know I *must* be unseasonable: but if you exclude me such company, how shall I ever be what you and the doctor would have me to be.

Lord L—— and Lord G—— were coming up to us: see your attraction, Miss Byron! said the countess.

But, joined in Miss Grandison, we will not leave our little Jervois by herself, expecting and longing! Our cousins Reeves—only that when they are together, they cannot want company—should not be thus left. Is there more than one heart among us?—This man's excepted, humorously pushing Mr. Grandison, as if from the company—Let us be orderly, and take our seats.

How cruel is this! said Mr. Grandison, appealing to Sir Charles.

Indeed I think it is a little cruel, Charlotte.

Not so: let him be good then.—Till when, may all our sex say, to such men as my cousin has been—'Thus let it 'be done by the man, whom, if he were good, good persons 'would delight to honour.'

Shame, if not principle, said Lord L——, smiling, would effect the cure, if all ladies were to act thus. Don't you think so, cousin Everard?

Well, well, said Mr. Grandison, I will be good, as fast as I can: but, doctor, what say you?—Rome was not built in a day.

I have great hopes of Mr. Grandison, said the doctor. But, ladies, you must not, as Mr. Grandison observed, exclude from the benefit of *your* conversation the man whom you wish to be good.

What! Not till he *is* good? said Miss Grandison. Did I not say, we should delight to honour him when he was?

But, what, Sir Charles? (come, I had rather take my cue from you than anybody); what are the signs which I am to give to be allowed——

Only these, my cousin—When you can be serious on serious subjects; yet so cheerful in your seriousness, as if it sat easy upon you; when you can, at times, prefer the company and conversation of Dr. Bartlett, who is not a solemn or severe man, to any other; and, in general, had

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rather stand well in his opinion, than in that of the gayest man or woman in the world.

Provided yours, Sir Charles, may be added to the doctor's——

Command me, Mr. Grandison, whenever you two are together. We will not oppress you with our subjects. Our conversation shall be that of men, of *cheerful* men. You shall lead them and change them at pleasure. The first moment (and I will watch for it) that I shall imagine you to be tired or uneasy, I will break off the conversation; and you shall leave us, and pursue your own diversions, without a question.

You were always indulgent to me, Sir Charles, said Mr. Grandison; and I have retired, and blushed to myself, sometimes, for *wanting* your indulgence.

Tea was preparing. Sir Charles took his own seat next Lord L——, whom he set in to talk of Scotland. He enjoyed the account my lord gave of the pleasure which the countess, on that her first journey into those parts, gave to all *his* family and friends; as Lady L—— on her part acknowledged she had a grateful sense of *their* goodness to her.

I rejoice, said Sir Charles, that the sea divides us not from such worthy people, as you, my lord, have given us a relation to. Next visit you make (Charlotte, I hope, will accompany me) I intend to make one in your train, as I have told your lordship before.

You will add to our pleasure, Sir Charles. All my relations are prepared to do you honour.

But, my lord, did not the ladies think a little hardly of your lordship's engagement? that a man of your merit should go from Scotland for a wife? I do assure you, my lord, that, in all the countries I have been in, I never saw finer women than I have seen in Scotland; and, in very few nations, though six times as large, greater numbers of them.

I *was* to be the happiest of men, Sir Charles, in a Grandison—I thank *you*, bowing.

It is one of my felicities, my lord, that my sister calls herself yours.

Lady L—— whispering me, as I sat between her and

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Miss Grandison, The two worthiest hearts in the world, Miss Byron! my Lord L——'s, and my brother's!

With joy I congratulate your ladyship on both, rewhispered I. May God long continue to you two such blessings!

I thought of the vile Sir Hargrave at the time.

I can tell you how, said Mr. Grandison, to repay that nation—You, Sir Charles, shall go down, and bring up with you a Scottish lady.

I was vexed with myself for starting. I could not help it.

Don't you think, Lucy, that Sir Charles made a very fine compliment to the Scottish ladies?—I own that I have heard the women of our northern counties praised *also*. But are there not, think you, as pretty women in England?

My sister Harriet, applied Sir Charles to me, you need not, I hope, be told, that I am a great admirer of fine women.

I had liked to have bowed—I should not have been able to recover myself, had I so seemed to apply his compliment.

I had the less wonder that you are, Sir Charles, because, in the word *fine*, you include mind as well as person.

That's my good girl! said Miss Grandison, as she poured out the tea: and so he does.

My dear Charlotte, whispered I—Pray, say something encouraging to Lord G——. He is pleased with everybody; but nobody says anything to him; and he, I see, both loves and fears you.

Hush, child, whispered she again. The man's best when he is silent. If it be his day to *love*, it is his day to *fear*. What a deuce! shall a woman's time be never.

That's good news for my lord: shall I hint to him, that his time *will* come?

Do, if you dare. I want you to provoke me. She spoke aloud.

I have done, said I.

My lord, what do you think Miss Byron says?

For Heaven's sake, dear Miss Grandison!

Nay, I *will* speak it.

Pray, madam, let me know, said my lord.

You will know Miss Grandison in time, said Sir Charles. I trust her not with any of *my* secrets, Miss Byron.

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The more ungenerous you, Sir Charles: for you get out of me all mine. I complained of you, sir, to Miss Byron, for your reserves at Colnebrook.

Be so good, madam, said my lord——

Nay nothing but the mountain and the mouse. Miss Byron only wanted to see your collection of insects.

Miss Byron will do me great honour——

If Charlotte won't attend you, madam, said the countess, to my Lord G——'s, I will.

Have I not brought you off, Harriet? whispered Miss Grandison—Trust me another time.—She will let you know the day before, my lord.

Miss Grandison, my lord, said I, loves to alarm. But I will with pleasure wait on *her*, and on the countess, whenever they please.

You will see many things worth your notice, madam, in Lord G——'s collection, said Sir Charles to me. But Charlotte thinks nothing less than men and women worthy of hers; her parrot and squirrel, the one for its prattle, the other for its vivacity, excepted.

Thank you, Sir Charles—But pray do *you* be quiet! I fear nobody else.

Miss Byron, said the countess, pray spare her not: I see you can make Charlotte be afraid of *two*.

Then it must be of *three*, Lady L——. You know my reverence for my elder sister.

Indeed but I don't. I know only, that nobody can better tell what she *should* do than my Charlotte: but I have always taken too much delight in your vivacity, either to wish or expect you to rein it in.

You acted by me like an *indolent* parent, Lady L——, who miscalls herself *indulgent*. You gave me my head for your own pleasure; and when I had got it, though you found inconvenience, you choose rather to bear it, than to take the pains to restrain me—But Sir Charles, whatever faults he might have had when he was from us, came over to us finished. He grew not up with us from year to year: his blaze dazzled me; and I have tried over and over, but cannot yet get the better of my reverence for *him*.

If I have not my sister's love, rather than what she

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pleasantly calls her reverence, I shall have a much worse opinion of my own outward behaviour than of her merit.

Your outward behaviour, Sir Charles, cannot be in fault, said Lord L——; but I join with my sister Charlotte, in her opinion of what *is*.

And I too, said the countess—for I am a party—This is it, Sir Charles—Who that lies under obligations which they cannot return, can view the obliger but with the most delicate sensibility?

Give *me* leave, said Miss Emily, her face crimsoned over with modest gratitude, to say that I am one that shall ever have a reverence, superior to my love, for the best of guardians.

Blushes overspread my face, and gave a tacit acknowledgment, on my part, of the same sensibility, from the same motives.

Who is it, joined in Dr. Bartlett, that knows my patron, but must acknowledge——

My dear Dr. Bartlett, interrupted Sir Charles, from you, and from my good Lord L——, these fine things are not to be borne. From my three sisters, looking at *me* for one, and from my dear ward, I cannot be so uneasy, when they will not be restrained from acknowledging, that I have succeeded in my endeavours to perform my *duty* to them.

I long to know, as I said once before, the particulars of what Sir Charles has done, to oblige everybody in so high a manner. Don't *you*, Lucy? Bless me! what a deal of time have I wasted since I came to town! I feel as if I had wings, and had soared to so great a height, that everything and person that I before beheld without dissatisfaction, in this great town, looks diminutive and little, under my aching eye. Thus, my dear, it must be in a better world, if we are permitted to look back upon the *highest* of our satisfactions in this.

I was asked to give them a lesson on the harpsichord after tea. Miss Grandison said, Come, come, to prevent all excuses, I will shew you the way.

Let it then be, said Mr. Grandison, Shakspeare's cuckow. You have made me enter with so much comparative shame into myself, that I must have something lively to raise my spirits.

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Well, so it shall, replied Miss Grandison. Our poor cousin does not know what to do with himself when you are got a little out of his reach.

This is not fair, Charlotte, said Sir Charles. It is not that graceful manner of obliging, in which you generally excel. Compliance and reflection are not to be coupled.

Well, well, but I will give the good man his cuckow, to make him amends.

Accordingly, she sang that ballad from Shakspeare; and with so much spirit and humour, as delighted everybody.

Sir Charles being a judge of music, I looked a little sillier than usual, when I was again called upon.

Come, my dear, said the kind countess, I will prepare you a little further. When you see your two elder sisters go before you, you will have more courage.

She sat down, and played one of Scarlatti's lessons; which, you know, are made to shew a fine hand. And surely, for the swiftness of her fingers, and the elegancy of her manner, she could not be equalled.

It is referred to you, my third sister, said Sir Charles [who had been taken aside by Mr. Reeves; some whispering talk having passed between them], to favour us with some of Handel's music: Mrs. Reeves says, she has heard you sing several songs out of the Pastoral, and out of some of his finest Oratorios.

Come hither, come hither, my sweet Harriet—Here's his Alexander's Feast: my brother admires *that*, I know; and says it is the noblest composition that ever was produced by man; and is as finely set as written.

She made me sit down to the instrument.

As you know, said I, that great part of the beauty of this performance arises from the proper transitions from one different strain to another, any one song must lose greatly by being taken out of its place; and I fear——

Fear nothing, Miss Byron, said Sir Charles: your obligingness, as well as your observation, entitle you to all allowances.

I then turned to that fine air,

> Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
> Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.

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Which not being set so full with accompanying symphonies, as most of Mr. Handel's are, I performed with the more ease to myself, though I had never but once before played it over.

They all, with more compliments than I dare repeat, requested me to play and sing it once more.

Dare repeat! methinks I hear my uncle Selby say, the girl that does nothing but repeat her own praises, comes with her *If I dare repeat!*

Yes, sir, I answer; for compliments that do not elevate, that do not touch me, run glibly off my pen: but such as *indeed* raise one's vanity; how can one *avow* that vanity by writing them down?—But they were resolved to be pleased before I began.

One compliment, however, from Sir Charles, I cannot, I find, pass over in silence. He whispered Miss Grandison, as he leaned upon my chair, how could Sir Hargrave Pollexfen have the heart to endeavour to stop such a mouth as that!

And now, having last night, and this morning, written so many sides, it is time to break off. Yet I could give you many more particulars of agreeable conversation that passed, were I sure you would not think me insufferably tedious; and did not the unkind reserve of my cousin Reeves, as to the business of that Bagenhall, rush upon my memory with fresh force, and help to tire my fingers. I am the more concerned, as my cousin himself seems not easy; but is in expectation of hearing something, that will either give him relief, or add to his pain.

Why, Lucy, should our friends take upon themselves to keep us in the dark as to those matters which it concerns us more to know than perhaps anybody else? There is a tenderness sometimes shewn on arduous occasions in this respect, that gives us much pain, as we could receive from the most explicit communication. And then, all the while, there so much strength of mind, and discretion, supposed in the person that knows an event, and such weakness in her that is to be kept in ignorance, that—But I grow as saucy as impatient. Let me conclude, before I expose myself to reproof for a petulance, that I hope is not natural to your

HARRIET BYRON.

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LETTER XLVIII.

Miss Harriet Byron to Miss Lucy Selby.

Thursday Night, March 2.

AND what do you think was the reason of Mr. Reeves's reserves? A most alarming one. I am obliged to him, that he kept it from me, though the uncertainty did not a little affect me. Take the account of it, as it comes out.

I told you in my former, that the person to whom Sir Charles was sent for out, was Mr. Bagenhall; and that Sir Charles had sent in for Mr. Reeves, who returned to the company with a countenance that I did not like so well as I did Sir Charles's. I now proceed to give you, from minutes of Mr. Reeves, what passed on the occasion.

Sir Charles took Mr. Reeves aside—This unhappy man (Sir Hargrave, I mean, said he) seems to me to want an excuse to himself, for putting up with a treatment which he thinks disgraceful. When we have to deal with children, humours must be a little allowed for. But you will hear what the proposal is now. Let not the ladies, however, nor the gentlemen, within, know anything of the matter till all is over. This is a day devoted to pleasure. But *you*, Mr. Reeves, know something of the matter; and can answer for your fair cousin.

He then led Mr. Reeves in to Mr. Bagenhall.

This, sir, is Mr. Reeves.—Sir Hargrave, in short, Mr. Reeves, among other demands that I cannot comply with (but which relate only to myself, and therefore need not be mentioned), insists upon an introduction to Miss Byron. He says, she is absolutely disengaged—Is she, sir?

I daresay she is, answered my cousin.

This gentleman has been naming to me Mr. Greville, Mr. Orme, and others.

No one of them has ever met with the shadow of encouragement from my cousin. She is above keeping any man in suspense, when she is not in any herself. Nothing has given her more uneasiness than the number of her admirers.

Miss Byron, said Sir Charles, *must* be admired by every one that beholds her; but still more by those who are admitted to the honour of conversing with her. But Sir Har-

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grave is willing to build upon her disengagement something in his own favour. Is there any room for Sir Hargrave, who pleads his sufferings for her; who vows his honourable intentions even at the time that he was hoping to gain her by so unmanly a violence; and appeals to her for the purity, as he calls it, of his behaviour to her all the time she was in his hands—who makes very large offers of settlements—Is there any room to hope that Miss Byron——

No, none at all, Sir Charles——

What! not to save a life, Mr. Reeves? — said Mr. Bagenhall.

If you mean mine, Mr. Bagenhall, replied Sir Charles, I beg *that* may not be considered. If Sir Hargrave means his own, I will pronounce that it is safe from any premeditated resentment of mine. Do you think Miss Byron will bear to see Sir Hargrave, Mr. Reeves? I presume he intends to beg pardon of her. Will she consent to receive a visit from him?—But is not this wretched trifling, Mr. Bagenhall?

You will remember, Sir Charles, this is a proposal of *mine*: what I *hoped* might be agreed to by Sir Hargrave; but that I was willing to consult you before I mentioned it to him.

I beg your pardon, Mr. Bagenhall: I now remember it.

If ever man doted upon a woman, said Mr. Bagenhall, it is Sir Hargrave on Miss Byron. The very methods he took to obtain her for a wife shew *that* most convincingly.—You will promise not to stand in his way, sir?

I repeat, Mr. Bagenhall, what I have heretofore told you, that Miss Byron (*You'll* excuse me, Mr. Reeves) is still under *my* protection. If Sir Hargrave, as he ought, is inclined to ask her pardon; and if he can obtain it, and even upon his own terms; I shall think Miss Byron and he may be happier together than at present I can imagine it possible. I am not desirous to be any way considered but as her protector from violence and insult; and that I *will* be, if she claim it, in defiance of a hundred such men as Sir Hargrave. But then, sir, the occasion must be sudden: no legal relief must be at hand. I will not, either for an adversary's sake, or my own, be defied into a cool and premeditated vengeance.

But, Sir Charles, Sir Hargrave has some hardships in this case. You will not give him the satisfaction of a gentleman:

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and, according to the laws of honour, a man is not entitled to be *treated* as a gentleman who denies to one——

Of whose making, Mr. Bagenhall, are the laws of honour you mention? I own no laws but the laws of GOD and my country. But, to cut this matter short, tell Sir Hargrave, that little as is the dependence a man of honour can have upon that of a man who has acted by an helpless woman as he has acted by Miss Byron, I will breakfast with him in his own house to-morrow morning, if he contradicts it not. I will attribute to the violence of his passion for the lady, the unmanly outrage he was guilty of. I will suppose him mistaken enough to imagine, that he should make her amends by marriage, if he could compel her hand; and will trust my person to his honour, one servant only to walk before his door, not to enter the house, to attend my commands, after our conversation is over. My sword, and my sword only, shall be my companion: but this rather, that I would not be thought to owe my safety to the want of it, than in expectation, after such confidence placed in him, to have occasion to draw it in my own defence. And pray, Mr. Bagenhall, do you, his friend, be present; and any other friends, and to what number he pleases.

When I came to this place in my cousin's minutes, I was astonished; I was out of breath upon it.

Mr. Bagenhall was surprised; and asked Sir Charles if he were in earnest?

I would not be thought a rash man, Mr. Bagenhall. Sir Hargrave *threatens* me: I never avoid a threatener. *You* seem to hint, sir, that I am not entitled to fair play, if I consent not to meet him with a murderous intention. With *such* an intention I never will meet any man; though I have as much reason to rely on the skill of my arm, as on the justice of my cause. If foul play is hinted at, I am no more safe from an assassin in my bedchamber, than in Sir Hargrave's house. Something must be done by a man who refuses a challenge, to let a challenger see (such is the world, such is the custom) that he has *better* motives than fear for his refusal. I will put Sir Hargrave's honour to the fullest test: Tell him, sir, that I will bear a great deal; but that I will not be insulted, were he a prince.

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And you really would have me——

I would, Mr. Bagenhall. Sir Hargrave, I see, will not be satisfied, unless something extraordinary be done: and, if I hear not from you, or from him, I will attend him by ten to-morrow morning, in an amicable manner, to breakfast at his own house in Cavendish Square.

I am in terror, Lucy, even in transcribing only.

Mr. Reeves, said Sir Charles, you undo me, if one word of this matter escape you, even to your wife.

Mr. Reeves begged that he might attend him to Sir Hargrave's.

By no means, Mr. Reeves.

Then, Sir Charles, you apprehend danger.

I do *not*. Something, as I said, must be done. This is the shortest and best method to make all parties easy. Sir Hargrave thinks himself slighted. He may infer, if he pleases, in his own favour, that I do *not* despise a man in whom I can place such a confidence. Do you, Mr. Reeves, return to company; and let no one know the occasion of your absence, or of mine, from it.

I have told you, my dear, what a difference there was in the countenances of both, when each separately entered the dining-room. And could this great man (surely I may call him *great*), could he, in *such* circumstances, on his return, give joy, pleasure, entertainment, to all the company, without the least cause of suspicion of what had passed?

Mr. Reeves, as I told you, singled out Sir Charles in the evening to know what had passed after he left him and Mr. Bagenhall. Sir Charles acquainted him, that Mr. Bagenhall had proposed to let him know that night, or in the morning, how Sir Hargrave approved of his intended visit. He has, accordingly, signified to me already, said Sir Charles, that Sir Hargrave expects me.

And will you go, sir?

Don't give yourself concern about the matter, Mr. Reeves. All must end well. My intention is, not to run into mischief, but to prevent it. My principles are better known abroad than they are in England. I have been challenged more than once by men who knew them, and thought to

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find their safety from them. I have been obliged to take some extraordinary steps to save myself from insult; and those steps have answered my end, in more licentious countries than this. I hope this step will preserve me from calls of this nature in my own country.

For God's sake, Sir Charles——

Be not uneasy on my account, Mr. Reeves. Does not Sir Hargrave value himself upon his fortune? He would be loth to forfeit it. *His* fortune is *my* security. And am I not a man of some consequence myself? Is not the affair between us known? Will not, therefore, the cause justify me, and condemn him? The man is turbulent; he is uneasy with himself; he knows himself to be in the wrong. And shall a man, who resolves to pay a sacred regard to laws divine and human, fear this Goth? 'Tis time enough to fear, when I can be unjust. If you value my friendship, as I do yours, my good Mr. Reeves, proceeded he, I shall be sure of your absolute silence. I will attend Sir Hargrave by ten to-morrow morning. You will hear from me, or see me at your own house, by twelve.

And then it was, as Mr. Reeves tells me, that Sir Charles turned from him, to encourage me to give the company a lesson from Dryden's Alexander's Feast.

Mr. Reeves went out in the morning. My cousin says he had been excessively uneasy all night. He now owns, he called in St. James's Square, and there breakfasted with Lord and Lady L——, Miss Grandison, Miss Emily, and Dr. Bartlett. Sir Charles went out at nine, in a chair; one servant only attending him: the family knew not whither. And his two sisters were fomenting a rebellion against him, as they humorously called it, for his keeping from them (who kept nothing from *him*) his motions, when they and my lord were together, and at his house: but my lord and Miss Emily pleasantly refused to join in it. Mr. Reeves told us, on his return, that his heart was so sunk that they took great notice of his dejection.

About three o'clock, just as Mr Reeves was determined to go to St. James's Square again, and, if Sir Charles had not been heard of, to Cavendish Square (though irresolute what to do when there), the following billet was brought

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him from Sir Charles. After what I have written, does not your heart leap for joy, my Lucy?

Half an hour after two.

DEAR SIR,—I will do myself the honour of visiting Mrs. Reeves, Miss Byron, and you, at your usual tea-time, if you are not engaged. I tell the ladies here, that those who have least to do, are generally the most busy people in the world. I can therefore be only answerable, on this visit, for, sir, your most humble servant, CHARLES GRANDISON.

Then it was, that vehemently urged both by my cousin and me, Mr. Reeves gave us briefly the cause of his uneasiness.

About six o'clock, Sir Charles came in a chair. He was charmingly dressed. I thought him, the moment he entered, the handsomest man I ever saw in my life. What a transporting thing must it be, my Lucy, to an affectionate wife, without restraint, without check, and performing nothing but her duty, to run with open arms to receive a worthy husband, returning to her after a long absence, or from an escaped danger! How cold! how joyless!—But no! I was neither cold nor joyless; for my face, as I felt it, was in a glow; and my heart was ready to burst with congratulatory meaning, at the visible safety, and unhurt person, of the man who had laid me before under such obligations to him, as were too much for my gratitude. Oh do not, do not tell me, my dear friends, that *you* love him, that *you* wish me to be his. I shall be ready, if you *do*, to wish—I don't know what I would say: but *your* wishes were always the leaders of *mine*.

Mrs. Reeves, having the same cause for apprehension, could hardly restrain herself when he entered the room. She met him at the door, her hand held out, and with so much emotion, that Sir Charles said, How well, Mr. Reeves, you have kept my secret!—Mr. Reeves told him what an uneasiness he had laboured under from the preceding evening; and how silent he had been, till his welcome billet came.

Then it was that both my cousins, with equal freedom, congratulated him.

And I'll tell you how the fool, the maiden fool, looked,

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and acted. Her feet insensibly moved to meet him, while he was receiving the freer compliments of my cousins. I courtesied bashfully; it was hardly noticeable; and, *because* unnoticed, I paid my compliments in a deeper courtesy. And then, finding my hand in his, when I knew not whether I had a hand or not—I am grieved, sir, said I, to be the occasion, to be the cause—And I sighed for one reason (perhaps you can guess what that was), and blushed for two; because I knew not what to say, nor how to look; and because I was under obligations which I could not return.

He kindly saved my further confusion, by making light of what had passed: and, leading me to a seat, took his place by me.

May I ask, Sir Charles? said my cousin Reeves, and stopt.

The conversation was too tedious, and too various, to be minutely related, Mr. Reeves. But Sir Hargrave had, by Mr. Bagenhall's desire, got his shorthand writer in a closet; and that unknown to me, till all was over. I am to have a copy of what passed. You shall see it, if you please, when it is sent me. Meantime, what think you of a compromise at *your* expense, Miss Byron?

I dare abide by everything that Sir Charles Grandison has stipulated for me.

It would be cruelty to keep a lady in suspense, where doubt will give her pain, and cannot end in pleasure. Sir Hargrave is resolved to wait upon you: Are you willing to see him?

If, sir, you will advise me to see him.

I advise nothing, madam. Pursue your inclinations. Mr. Reeves is at liberty to admit whom he pleases into his house: Miss Byron to see in it, or wheresoever she is, whom *she* pleases. I told him my mind very freely: but I left him determined to wait on you. I have reason to believe he will behave very well. I shall be surprised, if he does not in the humblest manner ask your pardon; and *yours*, Mr. Reeves, and your lady's. But if you have any apprehensions, madam (to me), I will be ready to attend you at five minutes' notice, before he shall be admitted to your presence.

It is very good, sir, said Mr. Reeves, to be ready to favour Miss Byron with your countenance, on such an occasion. But I hope we need not give you that trouble in this house.

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Sir Charles went away soon after; and Mr. Reeves has been accusing himself ever since, with answering him too abruptly, though he meant nothing but the truest respect. And yet, as I have written it, on re-perusal, I don't above half like Mr. Reeves's answer. But where high respect is entertained, grateful hearts will always, I believe, be accusing themselves of imperfections, which none other see, or can charge them with.

As Sir Charles is safe, and I have now nothing to apprehend but Sir Hargrave's visit, I will despatch this letter, with assurances that I am, my dear Lucy, your ever affectionate,

HARRIET BYRON.

LETTER XLIX.

Miss Harriet Byron to Miss Lucy Selby.

Friday, one o'clock, March 3.

SIR CHARLES has just sent the impatiently expected paper, transcribed by the shorthand writer from his minutes of the conversation that passed on Sir Charles's intrepid visit at Sir Hargrave's. *Intrepid*, I call it: but had I known of it, as Mr. Reeves did, before the event, in some measure, justified the *rashness*, I should have called it rash, and been for proposing to send peace-officers to Cavendish Square, or taking some method to know whether he were safe in his person; especially when three o'clock approached; and his dinner-time is earlier than that of most other people of fashion.

Mr. Reeves has been so good as to undertake to transcribe this long paper for me, that I may have time to give you an account of three particular visits which I have received. I asked Mr. Reeves, if it were not a strange way of proceeding in this Bagenhall to have his shorthand writer, and now turned listener, always with him? He answered, it was not an usual way; but, in cases of this nature, where murder, and a trial, were expected to follow the rashness, in a court of justice, he thought it carried with it, though a face of premeditation, yet a look of fairness; and there was no doubt but the man had been in bad scrapes before now, and was willing to use every precaution for the future.

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THE PAPER.

On Thursday morning, March the 2d, 17. I, Henry Cotes, according to notice given me the preceding evening, went to the house of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, baronet, in Cavendish Square, about half an hour after eight in the morning, in order to take minutes in shorthand, of a conversation that was expected to be held between the said Hargrave Pollexfen and Sir Charles Grandison, baronet, upon a debate between the said gentlemen; on which I had once before attended James Bagenhall, esquire, at the house of the said Sir Charles Grandison in St. James's Square; and from which consequences were apprehended, that might make an exact account of what passed of great importance.

I was admitted, about nine o'clock, into the withdrawing-room; where were present the said Sir Hargrave, the said James Bagenhall, Solomon Merceda, esquire, and John Jordan, esquire: and they were in full conversation about the reception that was to be given to the said Sir Charles Grandison; which not being a part of my orders or business, I had no command to take down; but the *contrary*.

And that I might, with the less interruption, take minutes of the expected conversation, I was ordered to place myself in a large closet adjoining to the said withdrawing-room, from which it was separated by a thin wainscot partition: but, lest the said Sir Charles should object to the taking of the said minutes, I was directed to conceal myself there till called forth; but to take the said minutes fairly and truly, as, upon occasion, I would make oath to the truth thereof.

About half an hour after nine o'clock, I heard Mr. Bagenhall, with an oath, that denoted by the voice, eagerness and surprise, say, Sir Charles was come. And immediately a footman entered, and said, 'Sir Charles Grandison!'

Then three or four of the gentlemen spoke together pretty loud and high; but what they said I thought not in my orders to note down. But this is not improper to note: Sir Hargrave said, Give me that pair of pistols, and let him follow me into the garden. By G—, he shall take *one!*

No, no! I heard Mr. Merceda say; who, being a foreigner, I knew his voice from the rest—No, no! That must not be.

And another voice, I believe, by the lisp, it was Mr. Jordan's, say, Let us, Sir Hargrave, hear what a man so gallant has to say for himself. *Occasions* may arise *afterwards*.

Mr. Bagenhall, whose voice I well knew, said, D—n his

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blood, if a hair of Sir Charles Grandison's head should be hurt on this visit!

Do I, d—n ye all, said Sir Hargrave, offer anything unfair, when I would give him the choice of the pistols?

What! in your own garden! A pretty story, whichsoever drops! said Mr. Merceda. The devil's in it, if he may not be *forced* now to give you the satisfaction of a gentleman elsewhere.

Desire Sir Charles (d—n his blood, said Sir Hargrave) to come in. And then [as I saw through a knot-hole, that I just then, hunting for a crack in the wainscot-partition, discovered] Sir Charles entered; and I saw that he looked very sedate and cheerful; and he had his sword by his side, though in a morning-dress. And then the conversation began, as follows:

Sir Ch. Your servant, Sir Hargrave. Mr. Bagenhall, yours. Your servant, gentlemen.

Mr. Bag. Yours, Sir Charles. You are a man of your word. This gentleman is Mr. Jordan, Sir Charles. This gentleman is Mr. Merceda.

Sir Ch. Mr. Merceda!—I have heard of Mr. Merceda.—I have been very free, Sir Hargrave, to invite myself to breakfast with you.

Sir Har. Yes, by G—! And so you have before now. Have you anybody with you, sir?—If you have, let them walk in.

Sir Ch. Nobody, sir.

Sir Har. These are gentlemen, sir. They are men of honour. They are *my* friends.

Sir Ch. They look like gentlemen. I suppose every man a man of honour, till I find him otherwise.

Sir Har. But don't think I have them here to intimidate——

Sir Ch. Intimidate, Sir Hargrave! I know not what it is to be intimidated. You say, the gentlemen are your friends. I come with a view to increase, and not diminish, the number of your friends.

Sir Har. 'Increase the number of my friends!'—What! with one who robbed me of the only woman on earth that is worth having! And who, but for the unmanly advantage taken of me, had been my wife before the day was over, sir! And yet to refuse me the satisfaction of a gentleman, sir!—But I hope you are now come——

Sir Ch. To breakfast with you, Sir Hargrave—Don't be warm. I am determined, if possible, not to be provoked—But I must not be ill treated.

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Sir Har. Why then, sir, take one of those two pistols. My chariot shall carry us——

Sir Ch. Nowhere, Sir Hargrave. What has hitherto passed between us was owing to accident. It is not my way to recriminate. To your own heart, however, I appeal: that must convince you, that the method you took to gain the lady rendered you unworthy of her. I took no *unmanly* advantage of you. That I refused to meet you in the way you have demanded, gives me a title to call myself your best friend——

Sir Har. 'My best friend!' sir——

Sir Ch. Yes, sir. If either the preservation of your own life, or the saving you a long regret for taking that of another, as the chance might have been, deserves your consideration. In short, it depends upon yourself, Sir Hargrave, to let me know whether you were guilty of a bad action from mad and violent passion, or from design, and a natural bias, if I may so call it, to violence; which alone can lead you to think of justifying one bad action by another.

Sir Har. Then, sir, account me a man of *natural violence*, if you please. Who shall value the opinion of a man that has disgracefully—G— d—n you, sir—Do you see—what marks I shall carry to my grave——

Sir Ch. Were I as violent as you, Sir Hargrave, you might carry those marks to your grave, and not wear them long.—Let us breakfast, sir. That will give you time to cool. Were I even to do as you would have me, you would best find your account in being cool. You cannot think I would take such an advantage of you, as your passion would give me.

Mr. Bag. Nobly said, by Heaven! Let us breakfast, Sir Hargrave. Then you will be cooler. Then you will be fitter to discuss this point, or any other.

Mr. Mer. Very right. You have a noble enemy, Sir Hargrave.

Sir Ch. I am no man's enemy, Mr. Merceda. Sir Hargrave should consider, that in the occasion for all this, he was to blame; and that all *my* part in the affair was owing to accident, not malice.

Mr. Jor. I doubt not, Sir Charles, but you are ready to ask pardon of Sir Hargfave, for your part——

Sir Ch. Ask pardon, sir!—No!—I think I *ought* to have done just as I did. Were it to do again, I should do it, whoever were the man.

Sir Har. See there! See there!—Mr. Bagenhall, Mr. Merceda, Mr. Jordan! See there! Hear that!—Who can have patience?

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Sir Ch. I can tell you who ought to have patience, Sir Hargrave. I should have a very mean opinion of any man here, called upon as I was, if he had not done just as I did: and a still meaner than I have of *you*, Sir Hargrave, had you, in the like case, refused assistance to a woman in distress. But I will not repeat what I have written.

Sir Har. If you are a *man*, Sir Charles Grandison, take your choice of one of those pistols. G— d—n you! I *insist* upon it.

And I saw through the knot-hole that Sir Hargrave arose in passion.

Sir Ch. As I am a *man*, Sir Hargrave, I will *not*. It might look to an angry man like an insult, which I am above intending, were I to say, that I have given, on our *first* interview, proofs that I want not courage. I give you now, as I think, the highest I *can* give in refusing your challenge. A personal insult I know how to repel. I know how to defend myself—But, as I said, I will not repeat anything I have written.

Mr. Mer. But, Sir Charles, you have threatened a man of honour in what you have written, if we take you right, with a weapon that ought to be used only to a scoundrel; yet refuse——

Sir Ch. The man, sir, that shall take it into his head to insult me, may do it with the greater safety, though perhaps not with impunity, as he may be assured I will not kill him for it, if I can help it. I can play with my weapons, sir; (it may look like boasting;) but will not play with any man's life, nor consent to make a sport of my own.

Sir Har. D—n your coolness, sir!—I cannot bear——

Sir Ch. Curse not your safety, Sir Hargrave.

Mr. Jor. Indeed, Sir Charles, I could not bear such an air of superiority——

Sir Ch. It is *more* than an air, Mr. Jordan. The man who can think of justifying one violent action by another, must give a *real* superiority against himself. Let Sir Hargrave confess his fault—I have put him in the way of doing it, with all the credit to himself that a man can have who has *committed* a fault—and I offer him my hand.

Sir Har. Damnable insult!—What! own a fault to a man who, without any provocation, has dashed my teeth down my throat; and, as you see—Gentlemen—say, can I, ought I, *now*, to have patience?

Sir Ch. I intended not to do you any of this mischief, Sir Hargrave. I drew not my sword, to return a pass made

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by yours—Actually received a raking on my shoulder from a sword that was aimed at my heart. I sought nothing but to hinder you from doing that mischief to *me*, which I was resolved not to do to *you*. This, Sir Hargrave, this, gentlemen, was the state of the case; and the cause such as no man of honour could refuse engaging in.—And now, sir, I meet you, upon my own invitation, in your own house, unattended and alone, to shew you, that I have the same disposition as I had from the first, to avoid doing you injury: and *this* it is, gentlemen, that gives me a superiority to Sir Hargrave, which he may lessen by behaving as I, in this case, would behave to him.

Mr Bag. By G—, this is nobly said!

Mr. Jor. I own, Sir Hargrave, that I would sooner kneel to such a man as this, than to a king on his throne.

Sir Har. D—n me, if I forgive him, with these marks about me!—I insist upon your taking one of those pistols, sir.—Gentlemen, my friends, he boasts of his advantages: he *may* have some from his cursed coolness: he can have none any other way. Bear witness, I forgive him if he lodges a brace of bullets in my heart—Take one of those pistols, sir. They are equally loaded—Bear witness, if I die, that I have provoked my fate. But I will die like a man of honour.

Sir Ch. To *die* like a man of honour, Sir Hargrave, you must have *lived* like one. You should be sure of your cause. But these pistols are too ready a mischief. Were I to meet you in *your own* way, Sir Hargrave, I should not expect that a man so enraged would fire his over *my* head, as I should be willing to do mine over *his*. Life I would not put upon the perhaps involuntary twitch of a finger.

Sir Har. Well then, the sword. You came, though undressed, with your sword on.

Sir Ch. I did; and for the reason I gave to Mr. Bagenhall. I draw it not, however, but in my own defence.

Sir Har. [Rising from his seat.] Will you favour me with your company into my own garden? Only you and I, Sir Charles. Let the gentlemen, my friends, stay here. They shall only look out of the windows, if they please—Only to that grass-plot, sir—(pointing as I saw)—If *you* fall, I shall have the worst of it, from the looks of the matter, killing a man in my own garden: if I fall, you will have the evidence of my friends to bring you off.

Sir Ch. I need not look at the place, Sir Hargrave. And since, gentlemen, it is allowed, that the pistols may be dismissed; and since, by their lying loaded on the table, they

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seem but to stimulate to mischief; you will all excuse me, and you, Sir Hargrave, will forgive me——

And so saying, he arose, with great tranquillity, as I saw; and taking the pistols, lifted up the sash that was next to that at which Sir Hargrave stood, and discharged them both out of the window.

By the report, the writer is sure they were well loaded.

In ran a crowd of servants, men and women, in dismay. The writer sat still in the closet, knowing the matter to be no worse. One of the men cried out, This is the murderer! And they all (not seeing their master, as I suppose, at the window beyond Sir Charles, and who afterwards owned himself too much surprised to stir or speak) were for making up to Sir Charles.

Sir Charles then retiring, put his hand upon his sword: but mildly said, My friends, your master is safe. Take care I hurt not any of you.

Sir Har. I am safe—Begone, scoundrels!

Mr. Bag. Begone! Quit the room. Sir Hargrave is safe.

Mr. Mer. } Begone! Begone!
Mr. Jor. }

The servants, as I saw, crowded out as fast as they came in.

Sir Charles, then stepping towards Sir Hargrave, said, You will, some time hence, sir, think the discharge of those pistols much happier than if they had been put to the use designed when they were loaded. I offer you my hand: it is an offer that is not to be twice refused. If you have malice to me, I have none to you. I invited myself to *breakfast* with you. You and your friends shall be welcome to *dine* with me. My time is near expired (looking at his watch) —for Sir Hargrave seemed too irresolute either to accept or refuse his hand.

Mr. Jor. I am astonished!—Why, Sir Charles, what a tranquillity must you have within you! The devil take me, Sir Hargrave, if you shall not make up matters with such a noble adversary.

Mr. Mer. He has won me to his side. By the great God of heaven! I had rather have Sir Charles Grandison for my friend than the greatest prince on earth.

Mr. Bag. Did I not *tell* you, gentlemen?—D—n me, if I have not hitherto lived to nothing but to my shame! I had rather be Sir Charles Grandison in this one past hour, than the Great Mogul all my life.

Sir Hargrave even sobbed, as I could hear by his voice, like a child.—D—n my heart! said he, in broken sentences

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—And must I thus put up—And must I be thus overcome? By G—, by G—, Grandison, you must, you must walk down with me into the garden. I have something to propose to you; and it will be in your own choice either to compromise, or to give me the satisfaction of a gentleman: but you must retire with me into the garden.

Sir Ch. With all my heart, Sir Hargrave.

And taking off his sword, he laid it on the table.

Sir Har. And must I do so too?—D—n me, if I do!—Take up your sword, sir.

Sir Ch. I will, to oblige you, Sir Hargrave. It will be always in my choice to draw it, or not.

Sir Har. D—n me, if I can live to be *thus* treated!—Where the devil have you been till now?—But you must go down with me into the garden.

Sir Ch. Show me the way, Sir Hargrave.

They all interposed: but Sir Charles said, Pray, gentlemen, let Sir Hargrave have his way. We will attend you presently.

The writer then came out, by the gentlemen's leave, who stayed behind, at the windows. They expressed their admiration of Sir Charles. And Mr. Merceda and Mr. Bagenhall (the writer mentions it to their honour) reproached each other, as if they had no notion of what was great and noble in man till now.

Sir Charles and Sir Hargrave soon appeared in sight; walking, and as conversing earnestly. The subject, it seems, was some proposals made by Sir Hargrave about the lady, which Sir Charles would not comply with. And when they came to the grass-plot, Sir Hargrave threw open his coat and waistcoat, and drew; and seemed, by his motions, to insist upon Sir Charles's drawing likewise. Sir Charles had his sword in one hand; but it was undrawn: the other was stuck in his side: his frock was open. Sir Hargrave seemed still to insist upon his drawing, and put himself into a fencing attitude. Sir Charles then calmly stepping towards him, put down Sir Hargrave's sword with his hand, and put his left arm under Sir Hargrave's sword-arm. Sir Hargrave lifted up the other arm passionately: but Sir Charles, who was on his guard, immediately laid hold of it, and seemed to say something mildly to him; and letting go his left hand, led him towards the house; his drawn sword still in his hand. Sir Hargrave seemed to expostulate, and to resist being led, though but faintly, and as a man overcome with Sir Charles's behaviour; and they both came up together, Sir Charles's

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arm still within his sword-arm—[The writer retired to his first place.] D—n me, said Sir Hargrave, as he entered the room, this man, this Sir Charles, is the devil—He has made a mere infant of me. Yet he tells me, will not be my friend neither, in the point my heart is set upon. He threw his sword upon the floor. This only I will say, as I said below, Be my friend in that one point, and I will forgive you with all my soul.

Sir Ch. The lady is, must be, her own mistress, Sir Hargrave. I have acquired no title to any influence over her. She is an excellent woman. She would be a jewel in the crown of a prince. But you must allow me to say, she must not be terrified. I do assure you, that her life has been once in danger already: all the care and kindness of my sister and a physician could hardly restore her.

Sir Har. The most inflexible man, devil I should say, I ever saw in my life! But you have no objection to my seeing her. She shall see (yet how can I forgive you that?) what I have suffered in my person for her sake. If she will not be mine, these marks shall be *hers*, not *yours*. And though I will not terrify her, I will see if she has no pardon, no pity for me. She knows, she *very* well knows, that I was the most honourable of men to her, when she was in my power. By all that's sacred, I intended only to make her Lady Pollexfen. I saw she had as many lovers as visitors, and I could not bear it.—You, Sir Charles, will stand my friend; and if money and love will purchase her she shall yet be mine.

Sir Ch. I promise you no friendship in this case, Sir Hargrave. All her *relations* leave her, it seems, to her own discretion; and who shall offer to lead her choice? What I said below, when you would have made *that* a condition, I repeat—I think she ought *not* to be yours; nor ought you, either for your own sake or hers, to desire it. Come, come, Sir Hargrave, consider the matter better. Think of some other woman, if you are disposed to marry. Your figure——

Sir Har. Yes, by G—! I make a pretty figure now, don't I?

Sir Ch. Your fortune will make you happier in marriage with any other woman, after what has happened than this *can* make you. For my own part, let me tell you, Sir Hargrave, I would not marry the greatest princess on earth, if I thought she did not love me above all other men, whether I *deserved* her love or not.

Sir Har. And you have no view to yourself in the advice

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you give?—Tell me that—I insist upon your telling me that.

Sir Ch. Whenever I pretend to give advice, I should abhor myself, if I did not wholly consider the good of the person who consulted me; and if I had any retrospection to myself, which might in the least affect that person.

The breakfast was then brought in. This that follows was the conversation that passed at and after breakfast.

Mr. Bag. See what a Christian can do, Merceda. After this, will you remain a Jew?

Mr. Mer. Let me see such *another* Christian, and I will give you an answer. You, Bagenhall, I hope, will not think yourself entitled to boast of your Christianity?

Mr. Bag. Too true! We have been both of us sad dogs.

Sir Har. And I have been the most innocent man of the three; and yet, that's the devil of it, am the greatest sufferer. Curse me, if I can bear to look at myself in the glass!

Mr. Jor. You should be above all that, Sir Hargrave. And let me tell you, you need not be ashamed to be overcome as you are overcome. You really appear to me a *greater,* and not a *less,* man, than you did before, by your compromising with such a noble adversary.

Sir Har. That's some comfort, Jordan. But, D—n me, Sir Charles, I will see the lady: and you shall introduce me to her, too.

Sir Ch. That cannot be—What! Shall I introduce a man to a woman, whom I think he ought no more to see than she should see him? If I thought you would go, I might, if *she* requested it, be there, lest from what she has suffered already, she should be too much terrified.

Sir Har. What, sir! You would not turn *Quixote* again?

Sir Ch. No need, Sir Hargrave. You would not again be the *giant* who should run away with the lady.

The gentlemen laughed.

Sir Har. By G—, sir, you have carried your matters very triumphantly.

Sir Ch. I mean not triumph, Sir Hargrave. But where either truth or justice is concerned, I hope I shall never palliate.

Mr. Bag. Curse me, if I believe there is such another man in the world!

Sir Ch. I am sorry to hear you say that, Mr. Bagenhall. Occasion calls not out every man equally.

Sir Har. Why did I not strike him? D—n me, that must have provoked you to fight.

Sir Ch. Provoked, in that case, I should have been, Sir

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Hargrave. I told you, that I would not bear to be insulted. But, so warranted to take *other* methods, I should not have used my sword: the case has happened to me before now: but I would be upon friendly terms with you, Sir Hargrave.

Sir Har. Curse me, if I can bear my own littleness!

Sir Ch. When you give this matter your cool attention, you will find reason to rejoice, that an enterprise begun in violence, and carried on so far as you carried it, concluded not worse. Every opportunity you will have for exerting your good qualities, or for repenting of your bad, will contribute to your satisfaction to the end of your life. You could *not* have been happy, had you prevailed over me. Think you, that a murderer ever was a happy man? I am the more serious, because I would have you think of this affair. It *might* have been a *very* serious one.

Sir Har. You know, Sir Charles, that I would have compromised with you below. But not one point——

Sir Ch. Compromise, Sir Hargrave!—As I told you, I had no quarrel with *you:* you proposed conditions, which I thought should not be complied with. I aimed not to carry *any* point. Self-defence, I told you, was the whole of my system.

Mr. Bag. You have given some hints, Sir Charles, that you have not been unused to affairs of this kind.

Sir Ch. I have before now met a challenger; but it was when I could not avoid it; and with the resolution of standing only on my own defence, and in the hope of making an enemy a friend. Had I——

Mr. Bag. What poor toads, Merceda, are we!

Mr. Mer. Be silent, Bagenhall; Sir Charles had not done speaking. Pray, Sir Charles——

Sir Ch. I was going to say, that had I ever premeditatedly given way to a challenge, that I *could* have declined, I should have considered the acceptance of it as the greatest blot of my life: I am naturally choleric; yet, in this article, I hope I have pretty much subdued myself. In the affair between Sir Hargrave and me, I have the pleasure to reflect, that *passion,* which I hold to be my most dangerous enemy, has not had, in any one moment, an ascendency over me.

Sir Har. No, by my soul! And how should it? You came off too triumphantly. *You* were not hurt. *You* have no *marks* to shew. May I be cursed, if, in forgiving you, which yet I know not how to do, I do not think myself the greater hero!

Sir Ch. I will not contest that point with you, Sir Har-

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grave. There is no doubt but the man, who can subdue his passion and forgive a *real* injury, is a hero. Only remember, sir, that it was not owing to your *virtue* that I was not hurt; and that it was not my *intention* to hurt *you*.

Mr. Jor. I am charmed with your sentiments, Sir Charles. You must allow me the honour of your acquaintance. We all acknowledge duelling to be criminal; but no one has the courage to break through a bad custom.

Sir Ch. The empty, the *false* glory, that men have to be thought brave, and the apprehension of being deemed cowards among men, and among *women* too, very few men aim to get above.

Mr. Jor. But you, Sir Charles, have shewn that reputation and conscience are entirely reconcileable.

Mr. Bag. You have, by Heaven! And I beg of you, sir, to allow me to claim your further acquaintance. You may save a soul by it.—Merceda, what say you?

Mr. Mer. Say! What a devil can I say? But the *doctrine* would have been nothing without the *example*.

Sir Har. And all this at my expense!—But, Sir Charles, I must, I will have Miss Byron.

Mr. Jor. I think everything impertinent, that hinders me from asking questions for my information and instruction, of a man so capable of giving both, on a subject of this importance. Allow me, Sir Charles, to ask a few questions, in order to confirm me quite your proselyte.

Sir Ch. [taking out his watch, as I saw]. Time wears. Let my servant be called in. The weather is cold. I directed him to attend before the door.

It was immediately ordered, with apologies.

Sir Ch. Ask me, Mr. Jordan, what questions you please.

Mr. Jor. You have been challenged more than once, I presume.

Sir Ch. I am not a quarrelsome man: but as it was early known that I made it a principle not to engage in a duel, I was the more subjected, I have reason to think, for that, to inconveniences of this nature.

Mr. Jor. Had you always, Sir Charles, that magnanimity, that intrepidity, and steadiness, I know not what to call it, which we have seen and admire in you?

Sir Ch. I have always considered spirit as the distinction of a man. My father was a man of spirit. I never feared man since I could write man. As I never sought danger, or went out of the way to meet it, I looked upon it when it came as an unavoidable evil, and as a call upon me for

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fortitude. And hence I hardly ever wanted that presence of mind in it, which a man ought to shew; and which sometimes, indeed, was the means of extricating me from it.

Sir Har. An instance of which this morning, I suppose you think, has produced?

Sir Ch. I had not that in my head. In Italy, indeed, I should hardly have acted as in the instance you hint at. But in England, and, Sir Hargrave, I was willing to think, in Cavendish Square, I could not but conclude myself safe. I know my own heart. I wished you no evil, sir, I was calm. I *expected* to meet you full of fire, full of resentment: but it is hard, thought I (as some extraordinary step seems necessary to be taken), if I cannot content myself with that superiority (excuse me, Sir Hargrave), which my calmness, and Sir Hargrave's passion, must give me over him, or any man. My sword was in my power. Had I even apprehended assassination, the house of an English gentleman could not have been the place for it; and where a confidence was reposed. But one particular instance, I own, I had in my mind when I said what I did.

All the gentlemen besought him to give it.

Sir Ch. In the raging of the war, now, so seasonably for all the powers at variance, concluded, I was passing through a wood in Germany, on my way to Manheim. My servant, at some distance before me, was endeavouring to find out the right road, there being more than one. He rode back affrighted, and told me he had heard a loud cry of murder, succeeded by groans, which grew fainter and fainter, as those of a dying person; and besought me to make the best of my way back. As I was thinking to do so (though my way lay through the wood, and I had got more than half way in it), I beheld six pandours issue from that inner part of the wood, into which, in all probability, they had dragged some unhappy passenger; for I saw a horse bridled and saddled, without a rider, grazing by the road side. They were well armed. I saw no way to escape. They probably knew every avenue in and out of the wood: I did not. They stopped when they came within two musket shots of me, as if they had waited to see which way I took. Two of them had dead poultry slung across their shoulders, which shewed them to be common plunderers. I took a resolution to ride up to them. I bid my servant, if he saw me attacked, make the best of his way for his own security, while they were employed either in rifling or murdering me; but if they suffered me to pass, to follow me. He had no portmanteau

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to tempt them. That, and my other baggage, I had caused to be sent by water to Manheim.—I am an Englishman, gentlemen, said I (judging, if Austrians, as I supposed they were, that plea would not disavail me): I am doubtful of my way. Here is a purse; holding it out. As soldiers, you must be gentlemen: it is at your service, if one or two of you will be so kind as to escort and guide me through this wood. They looked upon one another: I was loth they should have time to deliberate—I am upon business of great consequence. Pray direct me the nearest way to Manheim. Take these florins.

At last, one that seemed of authority among them, held out his hand: and, taking the purse, said something in Sclavonian; and two of them, with their pieces slung on their shoulders, and their sabres drawn, led me out of the wood in safety; but hoped, at parting, my farther generosity. I found a few more florins for them; and they rode back into the wood; I suppose to their fellows; and glad I was to come off so well. Had I either seemed afraid of them, or endeavoured to escape, probably I had been lost. Two persons were afterwards found murdered in the wood; one of them, perhaps, the unhappy man whom my servant had heard cry out and groan.

Mr. Jor. I feel *now* very sensibly, Sir Charles, your danger and escape. Your fortitude indeed was *then* of service to you.

Sir Har. But, Sir Charles, methinks I shall be easier in myself, if you give me one instance of your making, before now, an enemy a friend. Have you one in point?

Sir Ch. Stories of this nature come very ill from a man's own mouth.

Sir Har. I *must* have it, Sir Charles. A brother-sufferer will better reconcile me to myself.

Sir Ch. If you will *not* excuse me then, I will tell you the story.

Mr. Jor. Pray, sir——

Sir Ch. I had a misunderstanding at Venice with a young gentleman of the place. He was about twenty-two. I was a year younger——

Mr. Bag. At the Carnival, I suppose!—About a lady, Sir Charles?

Sir Ch. He was the only son of a noble Venetian family, who had great expectations from him. He was a youth of genius. Another noble family at Urbino, to which he was to be allied in marriage, had also an interest in his welfare. We had made a friendship together at Padua. I was at

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Venice by his invitation, and stood well with all his family. He took offence against me, at the instigation of a designing relation of his; to own the truth, a lady, as you suppose, Mr. Bagenhall, his sister. He would not allow me to defend my innocence to the face of the accuser; nor yet to appeal to his father, who was a person of temper as well as sense. On the contrary, he upbraided me in a manner that I could hardly bear. I was resolved to quit Venice; and took leave of his whole family, the lady excepted, who would not be seen by me. The father and mother parted with me with regret. The young gentleman had so managed, that I could not with honour appeal to them; and, at taking leave of him in their presence, under pretence of a recommendatory letter, he gave into my hand a challenge. The answer I returned, after protesting my innocence, was to this effect: 'I am 'setting out for Verona in a few hours. You know my 'principles; and I hope will better consider of the matter. 'I never, while I am master of my temper, will give myself 'so much cause of repentance to the last hour of my life, as I 'should have, were I to draw my sword, to the irreparable in-'jury of any man's family: or to run the same risk of injuring 'my own, and of incurring the final perdition of us both!'

Mr. Mer. This answer rather provoked than satisfied, I suppose?

Sir Ch. Provocation was not my *intention.* I designed only to remind him of the obligations we were both under to our respective families, and to throw in a hint of a still superior consideration. It was likely to have more force in that Roman Catholic country than, I am sorry to say, it would in this Protestant one.

Sir Har. How, how, Sir Charles, did it end?

Sir Ch. I went to Verona. He followed me thither; and endeavoured to provoke me to draw. Why should I draw? said I. Will the decision by the sword be *certainly* that of justice? You are in a passion. You have no reason to doubt either my skill, or my courage [On such an occasion, gentlemen, and with such a view, a man may perhaps be allowed to give himself a little consequence]: and solemnly once more do I avow my innocence, and desire to be brought face to face with my accusers.

He raved the more for my calmness. I turned from him, with intent to leave him. He thought fit to offer me a personal insult—I now, methinks, blush to tell it—He gave me a box on the ear, to provoke me to draw——

Mr. Mer. And *did* you draw, sir?

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Mr. Bag. To be sure, you *then* drew?

Mr. Jor. Pray, Sir Charles, let us know. You could not then *help* drawing? This was a provocation that would justify a saint.

Sir Ch. He had forgot, in that passionate moment, that *he* was a gentleman. I did not remember that *I* was one. But I had no occasion to draw.

Sir Har. What a plague—You did not cane him?

Sir Ch. He got well, after a fortnight's lying by.

Sir Har. Damnation!

Sir Ch. I put him into possession of the lodgings I had taken for myself, and into proper and safe hands. He was indeed unable, for a day or two, to direct for himself. I sent for his friends. His servant did me justice as to the provocation. Then it was that I was obliged, in a letter, to acquaint the father of a discovery I had made, which the son had refused to hear; which, with the lady's confession, convinced them all of my innocence. His father acknowledged my moderation; as the young gentleman himself did, desiring a renewal of friendship: but as I thought the affair had gone too far for a cordial reconciliation, and knew that he would not want instigators to urge him to resent an indignity, which he had, however, brought upon himself, by a greater offered to me, I took leave of him and his friends, and revisited some of the German courts; that of Vienna in particular; where I resided some time.

In the meanwhile the young gentleman married. His lady, of the Altieri family, is an excellent woman. He had a great fortune with her. Soon after his nuptials, he let me know, that, as he doubted not, if I had drawn my sword I should, from his violence at the time, have had his life in my power, he could not but acknowledge that he owed all his acquisitions, and the best of wives, as well as the happiness of both families, with *that* life, to me.

I apply not this instance: but, Sir Hargrave, as I hope to see you married and happy, though it can never be, I think, to Miss Byron, such generous acknowledgments as misbecome not an Italian, I shall then hope for from an Englishman.

Sir Har. And had your Italian any marks left him, sir?—Depend upon it, I shall never look into a glass, but I shall curse you to the very pit!

Sir Ch. Well, Sir Hargrave: this only I will add; that be as sensible as you will, and *as I am,* of the happy issue of this untoward affair, I will never expect a compliment from you that shall tend to your abasement.

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Mr. Jor. Your hand, Sir Hargrave, to Sir Charles——

Sir Har. What! without terms?—Curse me, if I do!—But let him bring Miss Byron in his hand to me (that is the least he can do): then may I thank him for my wife.

Sir Charles made some smiling answer: but the writer heard it not.

Sir Charles would then have taken leave: but all the gentlemen, Sir Hargrave among the rest, were earnest with him to stay a little longer.

Mr. Jor. My conversion must be perfected, Sir Charles. This is a subject that concerns us all. *We shall remember every tittle of the conversation;* and think of it when we do not see you.—Let me beg of you to acquaint me, how you came to differ from all other men of honour in your practice, as well as in your notions, upon this subject?

Sir Ch. I will answer your question, Mr. Jordan, as briefly as I can.

My father was a man of spirit. He had high notions of honour, and he inspired me early with the same. I had not passed my twelfth year, when he gave me a master to teach me what is called the science of defence. I was fond of the practice, and soon obtained such a skill in the weapons, as pleased both my father and master. I had strength of body beyond my years: the exercise added to it. I had agility; it added to my agility: and the praises given me by my father and master, so heightened my courage, that I was almost inclined to wish for a subject to exercise it upon. My mother was an excellent woman: she had instilled into my earliest youth, almost from infancy, notions of moral rectitude, and the first principles of Christianity; now rather ridiculed than inculcated in our youth of condition. She was ready sometimes to tremble at the consequences, which she thought might follow from the attention which I paid (thus encouraged and applauded) to this *practice;* and was continually reading lectures to me upon *true* magnanimity, and upon the law of kindness, benevolence, and forgiveness of injuries. Had I not lost her so soon as I did, I should have been a more perfect scholar than I am in these noble doctrines. As she knew me to be naturally hasty, and very sensible of affronts; and as she had observed, as she told me, that, even in the delight she had brought me to take in doing good, I showed an over-readiness, even to rashness, which she thought might lead me into errors, that would more than over-balance the good I aimed to do; she redoubled her efforts to keep me right: and on this particular acquirement

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of a skill in the management of the weapons, she frequently enforced upon me an observation of Mr. Locke, 'That 'young men, in their warm blood, are often forward to 'think they have in vain learned to fence, if they never 'show their skill in a duel.'

This observation, insisted upon, and inculcated, as she knew how, was very seasonable at that time of danger. And she never forgot to urge upon me, that the science I was learning was a science properly called of *defence*, and not of *offence;* at the same time endeavouring to caution me against the low company into which a dexterity at my weapons might lead me, as well as against the diversions themselves exhibited at the infamous places where those brutal people resorted: infamous even by name,* as well as in the nature of them.

From her instructions, I had an early notion, that it was much more noble to forgive an injury than to resent it; and to give a life than to take it. My father (I honour his memory!) was a man of gaiety, of munificence. He had great qualities. But my mother was my oracle. And he was always so just to her merit, as to command me to consider her as such; and the rather, he used to say, as she distinguished well between the *false* glory and the *true;* and would not have her boy a coward.

Mr. Mer. A good beginning, by my life!

Mr. Jor. Pray proceed, Sir Charles. I am all attention.

Sir Har. Ay, ay, we all listen.

Mr. Bag. Curse him that speaks next, to interrupt you.

Sir Ch. But what indelibly impressed upon my heart my mother's lessons, was an occurrence which, and the consequences of it, I shall ever deplore. My father having taken leave of my mother, on a proposed absence of a few days, was, in an hour after, brought home, as it was thought, *mortally* wounded in a duel. My mother's surprise on this occasion threw her into fits, from which she never after was wholly free. And these, and the dangerous way he continued in for some time, brought her into an ill state of health; broke, in short, her constitution; so that, in less than a twelvemonth, my father, to his inexpressible anguish of mind (continually reproaching himself on the occasion), lost the best of wives, and my sisters and I the best of mothers and instructors.

My concern for my father, on whom I was an hourly attendant throughout the whole time of his confinement;

* Hockley in the Hole, Bear Garden, &c.

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and my being by that means a witness of what both he and my mother suffered; completed my abhorrence of the vile practice of duelling. I went on, however, in endeavouring to make myself a master of the *science*, as it is called; and, among the other weapons, of the *staff*; the better to enable me to avoid drawing my sword, and to empower me, if called to the occasion, to give, and not take, a life; and the rather, as the custom was so general, that a young man of spirit and fortune, at one time or other, could hardly expect to escape a provocation of this sort.

My father once had a view, at the persuasion of my mother's brother, who was a general of note and interest in the imperial service, and who was very fond of a military life, and of me, to make a soldier of me, though an only son; and I wanted not, when a boy, a turn that way: but the disgust I had conceived, on the above occasion, against duelling, and the consideration of the absurd alternative which the gentlemen of our army are under, either to except a challenge, contrary to laws divine and human, or to be broke, if they do not (though a soldier is the least master of himself, or of his own life, of any man in the community), made me think the English service, though that of my country, the least eligible of all services. And for a man, who was born to so considerable a stake in it, to devote himself to another, as my uncle had done, from principles which I approved not, I could not but hesitate on the proposal, young as I was. As it soon became a maxim with me, not to engage, even in a national cause, without examining the justice of it, it will be the less wondered at that I could not think of any foreign service.

Mr. Bag. Then you have never seen service, Sir Charles?

Sir Ch. Yes, I made one campaign as a volunteer, notwithstanding what I have said. I was then in the midst of marching armies, and could not tell how to abate the ardour those martial movements had raised in my breast. But, unless my country were to be unjustly invaded by a foreign enemy, I think I would not, on any consideration, be drawn into the field again.

Mr. Jor. But you lead from the point, Mr. Bagenhall: Sir Charles was going to say somewhat more on the subject of duelling.

Sir Ch. When I was thus unhappily deprived of my mother, my father, in order to abate my grief [I was very much grieved], was pleased to consent to my going abroad, in order to make the grand tour, as it is called; having first

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visited all the British dominions in Europe, Gibraltar and Minorca excepted. I then supposing I might fall into circumstances that might affect the principles my mother had been so careful to instil into me, and to which my father's danger, and her death, had added force, it was natural for me to look into history, for the rise and progress of a custom so much and so justly my aversion; and which was so contrary to all laws divine and human; and particularly to that true heroism which Christianity enjoins, when it recommends meekness, moderation, and humility, as the glory of the human nature. But I am running into length.

Again Sir Charles took out his watch. They were clamorous for him to proceed.

When I found, continued he, that this unchristian custom owed its rise to the barbarous northern nations, who had, however, some plea to make in excuse which *we* have not, as they were governed by particular lords, and were not united under *one* head or government, to which, as to a last resort, persons supposing themselves aggrieved might appeal for legal redress; and that these barbarous nations were *truly* barbarous, and enemies to all politeness; my reasoning on this occasion added new force to prejudices so well founded.

The gentlemen seemed afraid that Sir Charles had done speaking. They begged he would go on.

I then had recourse, proceeded he, to the histories of nations famous for their courage. That of the Romans, who by that quality obtained the empire of the world, was my first subject. I found not any traces in their history, which could countenance the savage custom. When a dispute happened, the challenge from both parties generally was, 'That each should appear at the head of the army the 'next engagement, and give proofs of his intrepidity against 'the common foe.' The instance of the *Horatii* and *Curiatii*, which was a *public*, a *national* combat, as I may call it, affords not an exception to my observation. And yet even *that*, in the *early ages* of Rome, stands condemned by a better example. For we read, that Tullus challenged Albanus, general of the Albans, to put the cause of the two nations upon the valour of each captain's arm, for the sake of sparing a greater effusion of blood. But what was the answer of Albanus, though the inducement to the challenge was so plausible? 'That the cause was a public, not a private one; and 'the decision lay upon the two cities of Alba and Rome.'

Many ages afterwards, Augustus received a challenge from Mark Antony. Who, gentlemen, thought of brand-

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ing as a coward that prince, on his answering, 'That if 'Antony were weary of his life, he might find many *other* 'ways to end it than by *his* sword?'

Metellus, before that, challenged by Sertorius, answered with his pen, not his sword, 'That it was not for a captain 'to die the death of a common soldier.'

The very Turks know nothing of this savage custom: and they are a nation that raised themselves, by their bravery, from the most obscure beginnings, into one of the greatest empires on the globe, as at this day. They take occasion to exalt themselves above Christians, in this very instance; and think it a scandal upon Mussulmans to quarrel, and endeavour to wreak their private vengeance on one another.

All the Christian doctrines, as I have hinted, are point against it. But it is dreadful to reflect, that the man who would endeavour to support his arguments against this infamous practice of duelling, by the laws of Christianity, though the most excellent of all laws [excuse me, Mr. Merceda, your own are *included* in them] would subject himself to the ridicule of persons who call themselves Christians. I have mentioned therefore Heathens and Mahometans; though in this company, perhaps—But I hope I need not, however, remind anybody here, that that one doctrine of returning *good* for *evil*, is a nobler and more heroic doctrine than either of those people, or your *own*, Mr. Merceda, ever knew.

Mr. Jor. You have shewn it, Sir Charles, by example, by practice, to be so. I never saw a hero till now.

Sir Ch. One *modern* instance, however, of a challenge refused, I recollect, and which may be given, by way of *inference*, at least, to the advantage of my argument. The army of the famous Marshal Turenne, in revenge for injuries more than hostile, as was pretended, had committed terrible depredations in the palatinate. The elector, incensed at the unsoldiery destruction, challenged the marshal to a single combat. The marshal's answer was to this effect: 'That if the trust which the king his master had reposed in 'him would permit him to accept of his challenge, he would 'not refuse it; but, on the contrary, would deem it an 'honour to measure his arms with those of so illustrious a 'prince: but that, for the sake of his master's service, he 'must be excused.'

Now, though I think the marshal might have returned a still better answer (though this was not a bad one for a

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military man); yet where we can, as Christians and as men, plead the divine laws, and have not, when we meet as private subjects, the marshal's, nor even the Goth's excuse, I think the example worthy consideration.

And if, gentlemen, I *have* argued before now, or should I hereafter argue, as follows, to a challenger, shall I deserve either to be branded or insulted?

"Of what use are the laws of society, if magistracy may be thus defied? Were I to accept of your challenge, and were you to prevail against me, who is to challenge you? and if you fall, who him by whose sword you perish? Where, in short, is the evil to stop? But I will *not* meet you. My system is self-defence, and self-defence only. Put me upon *that*, and I question not but you will have cause to repent it. A *premeditated* revenge is that which I will not meet you to gratify. I will not dare to risk the rushing into my Maker's presence from the consequences of an act, which cannot, in the man that falls, admit of repentance, and leaves for the survivor's portion nothing but bitter remorse. I fear not any more the reproaches of men, than your insults on this occasion. Be the latter offered to me at your *peril*. It is perhaps as happy for you as for myself, that I have a fear of an higher nature. Be the event what it will, the test you would provoke me to, can decide nothing as to the justice of the cause on either side. Already you will find me disposed to do you the justice you pretend to seek. For your own sake, therefore, consider better of the matter; since it is not impossible, but, were we to meet, and both survive, you may exchange what you will think a real disgrace for an imaginary one."

And thus, gentlemen, have I almost syllogistically argued with myself on this subject:

Courage is a virtue;
Inordinate passion is a vice:
Such passion, therefore, cannot be courage.

Does it not then behove every man of true honour to show, that reason has a greater share than resentment in the boldness of his resolves?

And what, by any degree, is *so* reasonable as a regard to our duty?

You called upon me, gentlemen, to communicate my notions on this important subject. I have the more willingly obeyed you, as I hope, Sir Hargrave, on the occasion that brought us to this not unhappy breakfasting, will be the better satisfied that it has so ended; and as, if you are so good as to adopt them, they may be of service to others of your

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friends, in case of debates among them. Indeed, for my own sake, I have always been ready to communicate my notions on this head, in hopes sometimes to be spared provocation; for, as I have owned, I am passionate: I have pride: I am often afraid of *myself;* and the more, because I am not naturally, I will presume to say, a timid man.

Mr. Bag. 'Fore God, Sir Hargrave, somebody has escaped a scouring, as the saying is.

Mr. Mer. Ay, by my life, Sir Hargrave, you had like to have caught a Tartar.

Sir Ch. The race is not always to the swift, gentlemen. Sir Hargrave's passion would, doubtless, have laid him under disadvantage: defence is guarded: offence exposes itself.

Mr. Bag. But, Sir Charles, you despise no man, I am sure, for differing from you in opinion. I am a Catholic——

Sir Ch. A Roman Catholic—No religion teaches a man evil. I honour *every man* who lives up to what he professes.

Mr. Bag. But that is not the case with me, I doubt.

Mr. Mer. That is *out* of doubt, Bagenhall.

Mr. Jor. The truth is, Mr. Bagenhall has found his conveniences in changing. He was brought up a Protestant. These *dispensations,* Mr. Bagenhall!——

Mr. Mer. Ay, and they were often an argument in Bagenhall's mouth, for making me his proselyte.

Sir Ch. Mr. Bagenhall, I perceive, is rather of the religion of the *court,* than of that of the *church,* of Rome.

Mr. Bag. But what I mean, by telling you I am a Catholic, is this: I have read the opinion of some of our famous casuists, that, in some cases, a private man may become his own avenger, and challenge an enemy into the field.

Sir Ch. Bannes and *Cajetan,* you mean; one a Spaniard, the other an Italian. But the highest authority of your church is full against them in this point. The Council of Trent treats the combatants who fall, as self-murderers, and denies them Christian burial. It brands them, and all those who by their presence countenance and abet this shocking and unchristian practice, with perpetual infamy; and condemns them to the loss of goods and estates. And furthermore, it deprives, *ipso jure,* all those sovereign princes, who suffer such acts of violence to be perpetrated with impunity in the lands and cities which they hold of the church, of all the territories so held. I need not add to this, that Louis XIV.'s edict against duelling was the greatest glory of his reign. And permit me to conclude with observing, that the base arts of poisoning, by the means of treacherous agents, and

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the cowardly practice of assassination by bravoes hired on purpose to wreak a private revenge, so frequent in Italy, are natural *branches* of this old *Gothic tree*. And yet (as I have before hinted) the barbarous northern nations had pleas to make in behalf of duelling, from *their* polity, which we have not from *ours;* Christianity out of the question.

The gentlemen said, they would very seriously reflect upon all that had passed in this uncommon conversation.

Sir Har. Well, but, Sir Charles, I must recur to my old note—Miss Byron—She *must* be mine. And I hope you will not stand in my way.

Sir Ch. The lady is her own mistress. I shall be glad to see any and all of you, gentlemen, at St. James's Square.

Mr. Bag. One thing I believe it is proper to mention to Sir Charles Grandison. You know, sir, that I brought a young man to your house, to take minutes of the conversation that passed between you and me there, in apprehension of consequences. In *like* apprehensions, I prevailed upon Sir Hargrave——

Sir Har. And now, Bagenhall, I could curse you for it. The affair—confound it!—that I meant to be recorded for my own justification has turned out to his honour. Now am I down in black and white, for a tame—fool.—Is it not so?

Mr. Jor. By no means. If you think so, Sir Hargrave, you have but ill profited by Sir Charles's noble sentiments.

Sir Ch. How is this, Mr. Bagenhall?

Mr. Bag. I prevailed upon Sir Hargrave to have the same young man, who is honest, discreet, and one of the swiftest shorthand writers of the age, to take a faithful account of everything that has passed; and he is in that closet.

Sir Ch. I must say, this is very extraordinary—But as I always speak what I think, if I am not afraid of my own recollection, I need not of any man's minutes.

Mr. Bag. You need not in this case, Sir Charles. Nothing has passed, as Sir Hargrave observes, but what makes for your honour. We that set him to work, have more need to be afraid than you. We bid him be honest, and not spare any of us. We little thought matters would have ended so amicably.

Mr. Jor. Thank God, they have!

Mr. Mer. A very happy ending, I think!

Sir Har. Not except Miss Byron consents to wipe out these marks.

Mr. Bag. Mr. Cotes, your task is over. Pray step in with what you have done.

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The writer obeyed. Mr. Bagenhall asked, if the minutes should be read? Sir Hargrave swore No; except, as he said, he had made a better figure in the debate. Sir Charles told them, he could not stay to hear them: but that, as they *were* written, and as he had been allowed before a copy of what passed between him and Mr. Bagenhall, he should be glad to have one now; and the rather, as Sir Hargrave should have an instance, after he had perused it, of his readiness to condemn himself, if he found he had been wanting either to his own character, or to that of any man present.

They consented, that I should send Sir Charles the first fair copy. Sir Charles then took his leave.

The gentlemen all stood silent for several minutes, when they returned from attending him to the door, looking upon one another as if each expected the other to speak: but when they spoke, it was all in praise of Sir Charles, as the most modest, the most polite, the bravest, and noblest of men. Yet his maxims, they said, were confoundedly strange; impossible for such sorry dogs as them (that was their phrase) to practise.

But Sir Hargrave seemed greatly disturbed and dejected. He could not, he said, support himself under the consciousness of his own inferiority. But what could I do? said he. The *devil* could not have made him fight. Plague take him! he beat me out of my play.

And yet, said Mr. Merceda, a tilting-bout seems no more to him than a game at pushpin.

You would have thought so, said Sir Hargrave, had you observed with what a slight, and with what unconcernedness, he pushed down my drawn sword with his hand (though he would grant me nothing), and took me under the arm, and led me in to you, as though he had taken me prisoner. The devil has long, continued he, owed me a shame: but who would have thought he had so much power over Sir Charles Grandison, as to get him to pay it to me? But, however, I will never be easy till Miss Byron is Lady Pollexfen.

I take leave, honoured sir, to observe, that a few things are noted in this copy, which, to avoid giving offence, will not be in that I shall write for the gentlemen. I was ordered to shew it to Mr. Bagenhall, before you had it; but for this reason I shall excuse myself, as having not remembered that command.

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This, therefore, is a true copy of *all* that passed, taken to the best of the ability of, sir, give me leave to subscribe, your very great admirer, and most humble servant,

HENRY COTES.

Continuation of Miss Byron's Letter.

What a packet, including the shorthand writer's paper, transcribed by my cousin Reeves, shall I send you this time! I will not swell it by reflections on that paper (that would be endless), but hasten to give you some account of the visitors I mentioned.

Sir Hargrave Pollexfen came, without any previous notice, about nine o'clock.

My heart sunk when his chair stopt at the door, and I was told who was in it.

He was shown into the great parlour. My cousin Reeves soon attended him. He made great apologies to them (and so Mr. Reeves said he ought) for the disturbance he had given them.

He laid all to love—Prostituted name! made a cover to all acts of violence, indiscretion, and folly, in both sexes!

I was in my own apartment. Mrs. Reeves came up to me. She found me in terror; and went down and told him so; and begged that he would not insist upon seeing me.

The whole intent of this visit, he said, was to beg me to forgive him. It was probable that I should have the same emotion upon his first visit at any other time; and he entreated the favour of seeing me. He had a *right*, he said, to see me: he was a sufferer for my sake. They saw, he told them, that he was not the man he had *been;* and as he had been denied, and been brought to deny himself, the satisfaction due to a gentleman, from a man whom he had never offended, he insisted on having the opportunity given him of seeing me, and receiving my forgiveness, as what would consolidate his reconciliation with Sir Charles Grandison.

There was no resisting this plea.

And down I *trembled:* I can hardly say walked.

Notwithstanding all my little reasoning with myself, to behave with the dignity of an injured person; yet the moment I saw him approach me at my entrance into the parlour, I

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ran to Mr. Reeves, and caught hold of his arm, with looks, I doubt not, of terror. Had Sir Charles Grandison been there, I suppose I should have run to him in the same manner.

Ever-dear and adorable goodness! (were his words, coming to me) how sweet is this terror, and how just! *I* have forgiven worse injuries, pointing to his mouth. I meant nothing but honour to *you.*

Honour, sir! cruelty, sir! barbarity, sir! How can you *wish* to see the creature whom you so wickedly treated?

I appeal to yourself, madam, if I offered the least indecency —For all I have suffered by my mad enterprise, what but disgrace——

Disgrace, sir, was your portion, sir—(half out of breath) —What *would* you, sir?—Why this visit? What am I to do?

I hardly knew what I said; and still I held Mr. Reeves's arm.

Forgive me, madam: *that* is what you are to do: pardon me: on my knee I beg your pardon. And he dropt down on one knee.

Kneel not to me, sir—Pray do not kneel—You bruised, you hurt, you terrified me, sir—And, Lord bless me! I was in danger of being your *wife,* sir!

Was not this last part of my answer a very odd one? But the memory of what I suffered at the time, and of the narrow escape I had, left me not the least presence of mind, on his address to me kneeling.

He arose. *In danger of being my wife,* madam. Only that the method I took was wrong, madam!

Miss Byron, you see, is in terror, Sir Hargrave.—Sit down, my love. [Taking my hand, and leading me to the fireside.] How you tremble, my dear!—You see, Sir Hargrave, the terror my cousin is in—You see——

I do—I do; and am sorry for the occasion.—We will all sit down. Compose yourself, dear Miss Byron—And (holding up his clasped hands to me), I beseech you, forgive me.

Well, sir, I forgive you—I forgive you, sir.

Were you not in so much disorder, madam,—were it to be seasonable now—I will tell you what I have further to beg. I would——

Speak, sir, now; and never let me——

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Suffer an interruption, madam—I am too apprehensive of that word *never*. You *must* allow of my address. I ask you not any favour, but as I shall behave myself in future.

Yes, yes, sir, your behaviour—But, sir, were you to become the best man in the world, this, this, is the last time that I ever——

Dear Miss Byron! And then he pleaded his passion; his fortune; his *sufferings*.—A wretch! [Yet I had now and then a little pity for his disfigured mouth and lip]—His resolutions to be governed by me in every act of his life—The settlement of one half of his estate upon me.—The *odious* wretch mentioned *children*, my dear—*younger* children. He ran on in such a manner as if he had been drawing up marriage-articles all the way hither.

Upon my absolutely renouncing him, he asked me, if Sir Charles Grandison had not made an impression on my heart?

What, Lucy, could make me inwardly fret at this question? I could hardly have patience to reply. I now see, my dear, that I have indeed a great deal of pride.

Surely, Sir Hargrave, I am not accountable to you——

You are not, madam: but I must insist upon an answer to this question. If Sir Charles Grandison has made an application to you for favour, I can have no hope.

Sir Charles Grandison, sir, is absolutely disinterested. Sir Charles Grandison has made—There I stopt; I could not help it.

No application to my cousin, I assure you, Sir Hargrave, said Mr. Reeves. He is the noblest of men. Had he any such thoughts, I dare say he would be under difficulties to break his mind, lest such a declaration should be thought to lessen the merit of his protection.

A good thought of Mr. Reeves. And who knows, my Lucy, but there may be some foundation for it?

Protection! D—n it!—But I am the *easier* upon this assurance. Let me tell you, Mr. Reeves, that had I not found him to be a wonder of a man, matters should not have ended as they seem at present to have done.

But, Sir Hargrave, said Mrs. Reeves, permit me to say, as I know Miss Byron's mind, that there cannot be the least room to imagine that Miss Byron——

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Dear Mrs. Reeves, forgive me. But I cannot receive a denial from any other mouth than hers. Is there no room for a sincere penitent to hope for mercy from a sweetness so angelic, and who is absolutely disengaged?

You have had *mine* already, Sir Hargrave, said I. I am amazed, that, knowing my mind *before* your wicked insult upon me, you should have any expectation of this kind *after* it.

He again vowed his passion, and such stuff.

I think, Lucy, I never shall be able, for the future, to hear with patience any man talk of love, of passion, and such nonsense.

Let me summarily add, for I am tired of the subject, that he said a hundred impertinent things sillier than any of those said by Mr. Grandison, in my praise—[Indeed everything of this nature now appears silly to me]—He insisted upon a preference to Mr. Greville, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Orme.—He resolved not to despair, as his sufferings for my sake had given him (as he said he presumed to tell me) some merit in his *own* opinion, if not in *mine;* and as his forgiveness of the man who had injured him, ought, he thought, to have some weight in his favour.

He took leave of my cousins and me in a very respectful manner. I wish him no harm. But I hope I shall never see him again.

And now, Lucy, with the end of this very disagreeable visit, I will conclude my letter; and shall have another long one ready for the next post.

LETTER L.

Miss Harriet Byron to Miss Lucy Selby.

March 3.

I HAD not recovered myself after Sir Hargrave's visit, when Lady L—— and Miss Grandison called, as they said, for a moment: however, this agreeable moment lasted two hours. Miss Grandison, the instant she saw me, challenged me—Hey-day! What's the matter with our Harriet, Mrs. Reeves? And, patting my neck, Why these flutters,

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child? Perturbations delightful, or undelightful, Harriet, whether?

I told her who had been here, and but just left me; and, by the help of my cousins, gave them the particulars of what had passed.

They were greatly pleased; and the more, they said, as their brother, on seeing them uneasy, had acquainted them, that all matters between him and Sir Hargrave were accommodated; but had not had opportunity to tell them more.

Let me reckon with you, Harriet, said Miss Grandison (taking my hand with a schooling air): I am half jealous of you: Lady L—— has got the start of me in my brother's affections: but she is my elder sister; first come, first served; I can bear that: but I will not be cut out by a younger sister.

What is now to follow? thought I; and I fluttered like a fool; the more for her arch look, as if she would read my heart in my eyes.

Increased palpitation (oh the fool!) made it look as if I took her jest for earnest. What a situation am I in!

Dear Charlotte, said Lady L——, smiling, you shall not thus perplex our sweet sister.—My dear, don't mind her. You'll know her better in time.

Be quiet, Lady L——, I shall have it all out.

All what out? said I. O Miss Grandison, how you love to alarm!

Well, well, I'll examine farther into these perturbations another time. I have beat the bush before now for one hare, and out have popt two. But all I mean is; a paper, a letter (my brother called it a paper), was brought to him sealed up. He rewarded the bringer; but sent it directly away unopened (that we found out) to you, Harriet. Now, child, if I allow of *his* reserves, I will not allow of *yours*. Pray answer me fairly and truly: What are the contents of that paper?

They give the particulars of the conversation that passed in the alarming interview between Sir Charles——

And Sir Hargrave. That's my good girl. You see, Lady L——, how this young thief will steal away the affections of our brother from us both. He has showed *us* nothing of this. But if you would not have me jealous, Harriet, be sure keep no one secret of your heart from me——

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That merely relates to myself, I think I will not.

Then you'll be a good girl: and I'll give my love for you the reins, without a pull-back.

Just then a servant came in with a card.

'Lady D——'s compliments to Mrs. Reeves and Miss 'Byron; and if it would be agreeable she will wait 'on them presently, for one quarter of an hour. 'She is obliged to go out of town early in the 'morning.'

What shall I do now? said I. I was in a flutter; not being fully recovered from that into which Sir Hargrave's visit had thrown me.

What now?—What now? said Miss Grandison. Ah! Harriet, we shall find you out by degrees.

By the way, Lucy, you are fond of plays; and it is come into my head, that, to avoid all *says-I's* and *says-she's*, I will henceforth, in all dialogues, write names in the margin: So fancy, my dear, that you are reading in one of your favourite volumes.

Har. Do you know Lady D——?

Miss Gr. Very well: but I did not know that *you* did, Harriet.

Lady L. And I know she has a son: and I know she wants him to marry.

Har. That I may keep no secrets from my two sisters, my aunt Selby has written to me——

Miss Gr. Lately?

Har. Very lately.

Miss Gr. Oh! because you had not told me of that.

Mrs. Reeves. And pray, ladies, what is Lady D——'s character?

Lady L. She is a very good woman. She is a sensible and prudent woman.

Miss Gr. I am not very intimate with her: but have seen her in two or three of my visits. I have always thought her so. And pray, Harriet, don't you want to know what character my lord bears?

Har. My lord is nothing to me. I *have* answered. I have given my negative.

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Miss Gr. The deuce you have!—Why, the man has a good 12,000*l* a year!

Har. I don't care.

Miss Gr. What a deuce ails the girl?

Then humorously telling on her finger—ORME, *one;* FENWICK, *two;* GREVILLE, *three;* FOWLER, *four;*—I want another finger; but I'll take in my thumb—Sir HARGRAVE, *five*—And now (putting the fore-finger of one hand on the thumb of the other) Lord D——, *six!*—And none of them the man!—Depend upon it, girl, pride will have a fall.

What could she mean by that?—Sir Charles Grandison's sisters, I hope, will not—But I believe she meant nothing.

Have I pride, Miss Grandison? coldly and gravely asked I, as my cousin observed to me afterwards.

Miss Gr. Have you pride?—Yes, that you have; or you have *worse.*

What could this mad lady mean by this?—And what could *I* mean? For I had tears in my eyes. I was very low-spirited at that moment.

Lady L. Well, but Miss Byron, shall we be impertinent if we stay to see the lady?—I have a great value for her. She has been an admirable executrix and trustee for her son; and was as good a wife. I was just going; but, as she goes out of town to-morrow, will stay to pay my compliments to her. We can withdraw till you have had your talk.

Miss Gr. Does she come to persuade you, Harriet, to retract your refusal?

Har. I know not her business. I wrote my mind to my aunt Selby. But I believe my aunt could not have written, and the countess received what she wrote, by this time. But do not go: we can have no private talk.

Miss Gr. Well, but now I will tell you, without punishing your curiosity further, what Lord D——'s character is. He is as sober a man as most of the young nobility. His fortune is great. In sense he neither abounds, nor is wanting; and that class of men, take my word for it, are the best qualified of all others to make good husbands to women of superior talents. They know just enough to induce them to admire in *her,* what they have not in *themselves.* If a woman has prudence enough to give consequence

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to such a one before folks, and will behave as if she thought him her superior in understanding, she will be able to make her own will a law to him; by the way of *I will, shall I?*—Or, *If you please,* my dear, *I will do—what I think fit.* But a fool and a wit are the extreme points, and equally unmanageable. And now tell me, Harriet, what can be your motive for refusing such a man as this?

Har. I wish, my dear, you would not talk to me of these men. I am sick of them all—Sir Hargrave has cured me——

Miss Gr. You fib, my dear—But did you ever see Lord D——?

Har. No, indeed!

Miss Gr. 'No, indeed!'—Why, then, you are a simpleton, child. What, refuse a man, an earl too! in the bloom of his years, 12,000 good pounds a year! yet never have seen him—Your motives, child! Your motives!—I wish you are not already——There she stopt.

Har. And I wish, Miss Grandison, with all my heart, if that would tame you, that you were in love over head and ears, and could not help it!

Miss Gr. And wish you me that for spite, or to please me?—I *am* in love, my dear; and nothing keeps me in countenance, but having company among the grave ones. Dearly do I love to find girls out. Why, I found out Lady L—— before she would own a tittle of the matter. So prim!—'And *how can you think so,* Charlotte? *Who, I,* '*in love!* No, indeed! No man has a place in *my* heart!' —Then I was resolved to have her secret out. I began with my *roundabouts* and my *supposes*—A *leer*—as thus—[I was both vexed and pleased with her archness]—And then a *suppose*—Then came a blush—'Why, Charlotte, I cannot but '*say,* that if I were *obliged* to have the one man or the other '——' Then came a sigh, endeavoured in haste to be returned to the heart whence it came; and when it could not find its way back, to be cut into three halves, as the Irishman said; that is, into two half sighs, and a hem; and a 'Get 'you gone, for an impertinent.'—As much as to say, 'You 'have it!'—And when I found I *had,* and she owned it; why then I put my mad head to her grave one; and we had but one heart betwixt us.

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Lady L. [laughing]—Out of breath, Charlotte, I hope.

Miss Gr. Not yet—How often have I kept watch and ward for her! Sometimes have I lent her my dressing-room for their love meetings: yet, for the world, she would not marry without her papa's consent: no, but like the rest of us, she would suffer her affections to be *engaged*, without letting him know a syllable of the matter.—Very true, Lady L——, what signifies looking serious?

Lady L. Strange creature!

Miss Gr. Once or twice did I change dresses with her. In short, I was a perfect Abigail to her in the affair. And let me tell you, two sisters, agreed to manage a love affair, have advantages over even a lady and her woman.

Lady L. Mad creature!

Miss Gr. All this I did for her without fee or reward; only from the dear delight of promoting the good work, and upon the Christian principle of, Do as you would be done by.—Is not all this true, Lady L——? Deny it if you can.

Lady L. And have you *done*, Charlotte? Ah! my dear Miss Byron, you'll never do anything with this girl, except you hear all she has to say. And if you *have* a secret, 'tis better to let her know it at first. Charlotte is a generous girl, after all; but sometimes, as now, a very impertinent one——

What could these ladies mean by this, I wonder? If they suspect me to love somebody, surely this is not the way, that two such ladies, in *generosity*, should take; when they think I have no engagement; and know that the doubt must lie on their brother's side, whom, with all their *round-abouts*, as they call them, they cannot fathom.

I would give anything, methinks, to know if Sir Charles was ever in love.

Just then a rapping at the door made us suppose it was the countess. It was. After compliments to Mrs. Reeves and me, she embraced Lady L—— very affectionately, and Miss Grandison kindly; asking the first after Lord L——'s health, and the other after her brother: he is the man of all men, Miss Grandison, said she, that I want to see. We shall be in town soon for a month or two; and then you

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must make me known to one, whom everybody calls the best of men: as here, said she, coming up again to me, I have longed to be acquainted with one of the best of women.

Lady L. Miss Byron is, indeed, an excellent young woman. We do ourselves the honour of calling her *sister.*

Lady D. What an encouragement is that to be good! Even in this age, bad as it is, true merit will never want admirers. And let me say, that where beauty and goodness meet, as *here,* they adorn each other.

Agreeable Lady D——! thought I: my heart will not suggest a thought in favour of your *son;* but I shall easily be in love with *you.* The heart hardly deserves praise, my Lucy, that is not fond of it from the worthy.

Her ladyship took Lady L—— aside, and said something to her. Lady L—— answered with a no, as I suppose: to which Lady D—— replied, I am glad of that; adding, I am not afraid of saying anything to a person of Lady L——'s know prudence.

Ah! my Lucy! she asked Lady L——, I daresay, whether the acknowledged sisterhood extended to the brother, as a brother, or as—something else—And by her cheerful and condescending court to me afterwards, and to Mrs. Reeves, was satisfied by Lady L——'s answer, I make no doubt, that there is room for Lord D——'s address, for anything on Sir Charles's part.

I will not be mean, Lucy! Greatly as I admire somebody, these excellent sisters shall not find me *entangled in an hopeless passion.*

Her ladyship took my hand, and led me to the window. I was brought to town, said she, on an extraordinary occasion, two days ago; and must set out on my return in the morning. I thought I would not miss the opportunity of paying my compliments to a young lady, of whom I had heard everybody speak with great commendation. I make no doubt but your good aunt Selby has——There she stopt.

My aunt has sent me up two of your ladyship's letters, and copies of her answers.

I am pleased with your frankness, my dear. It was that part of your character that engaged me. Young women,

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in these cases, are generally either so affected, so starched (as if they thought there were something shameful in a treaty of this kind), or they are so awkward, that I have not patience with them. You have all the modesty—Indeed, my dear, your goodness of heart shines out in every feature of your face.

Your ladyship does me high honour.

I am pleased even with that acknowledgment. The discretion of a person is often most seen in minutenesses. Another would have made disqualifying speeches—But compliments made to the heart by one who is not accustomed to flatter; such compliments, I mean, as it would be culpable for a person not to be able to verify; should not be disclaimed. To say truth, my dear, I did not intend to mention one word of the matter to you, on this first visit. I only wanted to see you, and to converse with you a little, that I might make report accordingly to my son; who, however, knows not that I should pay my compliments to you: but the moment I saw you, your aspect confirmed all that I had heard said in your favour; and seeing you also so much caressed by two ladies of character so established! and no less pleased with what I observed of Mr. and Mrs. Reeves [you are a family of good people]; I was resolved to be as frank as you are, and as your aunt Selby has been —She is a good woman——

Indeed, madam, she is——

Accordingly, I have singled you out, in the face of everybody present—You will have the discretion to caution them on this subject, till you have seen my son (I am sure there can be no doubt on his side)—and till you know whether you shall approve of our proposals or not: and, without hesitation, I bespeak your good opinion of *me* till then. I am sure, my dear, we shall be very happy in each other. If you and my lord are happy, you and I *must* be so—But, when the knot is tied, I will be only your visitor, and that at your own invitation. I am thought to be a managing woman: managing women are not always the best to live with. You, I understand, are an excellent economist: [A glorious character in this age for a young woman!—Persons of the highest quality ought not to think themselves above

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it]. One person's methods may differ from another's; yet both may be equally good, and reach the same end. My son has found the *benefit* of my economy: nevertheless, his wife shall not have cause to think, that, where she means well, I will prefer my methods to hers. If ever I give advice, it shall only be when you ask it: and then, if you do not take it, I will not be angry; but allow, that, having weighed the matter well, you prefer your own judgment, on the best convictions. People who are to act for themselves should be always left to judge for themselves; because they only are answerable for their own actions. You blush, my dear! I hope I don't oppress you. I would not oppress a modesty so happily blended with frankness.

I was affected with her goodness. What an amiable frankness! Oh that all husband's mothers were like your ladyship! said I—What numbers of happy daughters-in-law would there then be, that now are not so!

Charming creature! said she. Proceed. I am glad I don't oppress you with my prate.

Oppress me, madam! You delight me! Talk of a bad world!—*I* ought, I am sure, to think it a good one!—In every matronly lady I have met with a *mother:* in many young ladies, as those before us, *sisters:* in their brother, a *protector:* If your ladyship has not heard on what occasion, I shall be ready to acquaint you with it.

Sweet child! Charming frankness! I have *seen,* I have *heard,* enough of you for my present purpose—We will return to company—Such company as I find you in, is not to be had at all times. I will restore you to them.

But, madam, declining her leading hand——

But what, my dear!

Have you not, madam!—But your ladyship could *not* have received any letter from my aunt Selby—I wrote——

I have *not,* my dear. I could not, as you say. But I shall find a letter from her, perhaps, on my return. You approve, I hope, of the proposal, if you shall have no objection to my son?

My aunt, madam, will let you know——

I will not have it otherwise than I wish it to be—Remember that I value you for the frankness you are praised

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for—A little female trifling to my *son*, if you will, in order to be assured of his value for you (and men love not all halcyon courtships), but none to *me*, my love. I'll assist you, and keep your counsel, in the first case, if it be necessary. He shall love you above all the women on earth, and convince you that he does, or he shall not call you his—But no female trifling to his mother, child! We women should always understand one another.

Because I would not be thought to be an insincere creature, a trifler, I think I ought to mention to your ladyship, that it would be a great, a very great, part of my happiness, to be deemed worthy of your friendship—without——

Without what?—You do well, perhaps, to blush! Without what?

Without the relation—if you please.

I was confounded with her goodness, Lucy. Here, my dear, is another superior character—I fancy her maiden name was Grandison.

But I *don't please*. So no more of this. Let us join company. And, taking my hand with the goodness of a real mother; yet her brow a little overclouded; she made apologies to them for taking me aside; and said, she could trust to their prudence; she was sure, they must needs guess at her view; and therefore she offered not to put a limit to their conjectures; since denial or evasion would but, in this case, as it *generally* did, defeat its own end, and strengthen what it aimed to weaken.

Is there no obtaining such a mother, thought I, without marrying Lord D——?—And should I refuse to see him, if an interview is desired, especially when Lady L—— has seemed to encourage the countess to think that somebody has no thoughts—Indeed I don't desire that that somebody should—If—I don't know what I was going to add to that *if*. But pray tell my grandmamma, that I hope her Harriet will never give her cause to lament her being *entangled in a hopeless passion*. No, indeed!

But, my Lucy, one silly question to *you* who have been a little *entangled*, and more happily *disentangled:* I catch myself of late in saying *him*, and *he*, and writing to you *somebody*, and such like words, instead of saying and writing

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boldly, as I used to do, Sir Charles, and Sir Charles Grandison; which would sound more respectfully, and yet am sure I want not respect. What is the meaning of this? —Is it a sign—Ah! my Lucy! you said you would keep a sharp look out; and did I not say I would upon myself: Surely I said truth: Surely you will think so, when you see such little silly things as these do not escape me. But when you think me too trifling, my dear, don't expose me. Don't read it out in the venerable circle. That to some may appear very weak and silly, which by others will be thought excusable, because natural. It would be wrong (as I yet never did it) to write separately to you. And what have I in my heart, were it to be laid open to all the world, that I should be—afraid—I was going to write, that I should be *ashamed* of? But I think I *am* a little ashamed, at times, for all that —Ah, Lucy! don't add, 'and so I ought.'

Lady D—— repeated her desire of being acquainted with Sir Charles. She has no daughter: so it was purely for the sake of his great character. She heard, she said, that he was the politest of brothers. That was always a good sign with her. He gives you, Miss Grandison, I am told, a great deal of his company.

Miss Grandison said, that their brother, she believed, was one of the busiest men in the kingdom, who was not engaged in public affairs; and yet the most of a family man. I endeavour, said she, to make home delightful to him. I never break in upon him when he is in his study, without leave: indeed I seldom ask it; for when he is inclined to give me his company, he sends his compliments to me, and requests, as a favour *from* me, what I am always ready to consider as one done *to* me. And I see he loves me. He is not uneasy in my company: he comes for half an hour, and stays an hour—But don't set me into talking of him; for my heart always dilates, when I enter into the agreeable subject, and I know not where to stop.

Lady L. Charlotte is a happy girl.

Miss Gr. And Lady L—— is a happy woman; for he loves *her* as well as he loves *me*. Indeed he is so good as to say (but I know it is to keep us from pulling caps) that he knows not which he loves best: we have different quali-

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ties he says; and he admires in each what the other has not.

Lady D. But what are his employments? What can he be so much busied in?

Miss Gr. A continual round of good offices. He has a ward. She has a large fortune. The attention he pays to her affairs takes up a good deal of his time. He is his own steward; and then he has a variety of other engagements, of which we ask him not one word; yet long to know something about them.—But this we are sure of, that, if he thinks anything will give us pleasure, we shall hear of it: if the contrary, he is as secret as the night.

Will nobody say one bad or one indifferent thing of this man, Lucy! There is no bearing these things! Oh, my dear, what a nobody is your poor Harriet!

Lady D. He is one of the handsomest men in England, they tell me.

Miss Gr. Sisters are not judges. They may be partial. His benignity of heart makes his face shine. Had I a lover but half as handsome as I think my brother, I should make no objection to him on the account of person.

Lady L. But he is the genteelest of men!—What think *you*, sister Harriet?

Har. 'Sisters are not judges. They may be partial.'

What meant Lady L—— to apply to me? But I had been some time silent. She *could* not mean anything: and both sisters complimented me on recognising the relation.

Lady D—— asked me how long I should stay in town?

I said, I believed not long. I had leave for three months. Those would be soon elapsed; and as my friends were so good as to be pleased with my company, I should rather choose to walk within than step out of my limits.

The countess, with a nod of approbation, said, with good young people it will be always so: and this is more praiseworthy in Miss Byron, as she may do what she pleases.

Then taking me a little aside—I hope, my dear, you meant nothing contrary to my wishes, when you referred, in so doubtful a manner, to what you had written to your aunt. You don't answer me! This is a call upon your frankness. Women, when anything is depending, on which

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they have set their hearts, are impatient—Don't you know that?—They love not suspense.

It is painful to me, madam, to decline a proposal that would give me a relation to so excellent a lady—But——

But *what*, my dear?—Let not maidenly affectation step in with its cold water. You are above it. Woman to woman, daughter to mother—You are above it.

Then, turning to the ladies, and to my cousins—You don't know, any of you (we are by ourselves), that Miss Byron's heart is engaged? Miss Grandison, let me apply to you: maiden ladies open their hearts to one another. Know you whether Miss Byron has yet seen the man to whom she wishes to give her hand? Her aunt Selby writes to me, that she has not.

Miss Gr. We young women, madam, often know least of our own hearts. We are almost as unwilling to find out ourselves, in certain cases, as to be found out by others. Speak, sister Harriet: answer for yourself.

[Was not this grievous, Lucy? And yet what ailed me, that I could not speak without hesitation! But this lady's condescending goodness—Yet this wicked Sir Hargrave! His attempt, his cruel treatment of me, has made me quite another creature than I was.]

My aunt Selby, madam, wrote the truth. To say I wish not to marry for some time to come, may sound like an affectation, because I have ever honoured the state—But something has happened that has put me out of conceit with myself, and with men too.

Lady D. With *all* men, child?—I will allow for a great many things in a *weak* mind, that I will not in *yours*. I have had a hint or two about an insult, or I know not what, from Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, since I came to town; for I have asked after you, my dear: but what is that but a confirmation of your merits? What a disagreeable woman must she be, whom but one man in the world could like!

But excuse me, Miss Byron, I have said abundance of impertinent things: I have gone further on this first visit than I intended. You must thank for this that ingenuous and open countenance, which confirms, at first sight, the character I had heard given by everybody who spoke of

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you. I shall see, perhaps, what your aunt Selby, to whom you refer, writes, when I get down. I shall soon be in town, as I said, for the rest of the winter; and then I will make myself mistress of your whole history from these ladies, and from yourself: and there shall end all my inquiries, and, I hope, all my solicitudes, on an article that is next my heart. —Meantime, adieu, my dear—Adieu.

She then, courtesying to all round, gave her hand to Mr. Reeves, who led her to her chair; leaving us all full of her praises.

Miss Gr. [Looking archly]. I say nothing as to her *particular* errand, because I would not be too curious; and because you ask *me* no questions, Harriet.

Lady L. This must do, Miss Byron: who would not wish for such a mother?

Har. Is the mother to be the principal inducement in such an article as this?

Miss Gr. Why, my dear, do you pretend, in such an age of petits-maîtres, to live single, till you meet with a man who deserves you?—But, Harriet, you must voluntarily open your heart to me. I have a good deal of curiosity; and whenever you are disposed to gratify it, will not *withdraw* my attention.

Har. I will read to you this moment, if you please, ladies, as to my sisters, what Lady D—— wrote to my aunt Selby; and what my aunt answered on the occasion.

Miss Gr. That's my best Harriet! I love to hear *how* and *everything about* these sort of matters.

Lady L. These girls, Mrs. Reeves, delight in love subjects: there is a kind of enthusiasm in these matters that runs away with them.

Miss Gr. Say you so, Lady L——? And pray had *you* ever any of this enthusiasm? And if you had, did matrimony cure you of it?—See, Harriet! My sister has not been married many months; yet how *quietly* she now talks of the *enthusiasm* of love to us maidens!—Ah! my dear Lady L——! women, I see, have their freemasonry, as well as men! Don't you think so, Mrs. Reeves? A poor secret after all, I believe, on both sides, whispered the lively lady, but loud enough for every one to hear what she said.

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Lady L—— called her a mad girl. But let us be favoured, said she to me, with your communications.

I pulled out the letters. I read the two first paragraphs in my aunt's letter to me, entire; for they propose the matter, and nothing else.

What follows, said I, is full of love and care, and so forth: but here is one paragraph more I can read to you.

Miss Gr. As much reserve as you please, sister Harriet. I am learning how to deal with you.

Lady L. Why that, Charlotte? No fear that you will tell us more than you have a mind we should know. Regard not, therefore, this threatening, Miss Byron.

Har. To own the truth, I cannot read everything my aunt writes: but the Countess of D——'s proposal, and what relates to that, I will read, if you please.

Miss Gr. What you will—Read what you will. I find we are not at present so well acquainted as we shall be hereafter.

What could Miss Grandison mean by that?

I read the last paragraph but one, in which my aunt proposes my coming down; and that I will either encourage the countess's proposal, or accept of Mr. Orme; ending with the earnest desire of my friends to have me married.

I then gave into Miss Grandison's hands the countess's first letter; and she read it out.

She gave it me back, and thanked me. Were all women, said she, capable of acting thus *frankly*, the sex would leave affectation to the men-monkeys. Remember, Harriet, that your openness of heart is one of the graces for which I principally admire you.

Lady L. Oh the rogue! Take care of her, Miss Byron! She tells you this, to get out of you all your secrets.

Miss Grandison may easily obtain her end, madam. She need only tell me what she best likes I should be; and I must try to be that.

Miss Gr. Good girl! And take this along with you; that when you convince *me*, that you will not *hide*, I will convince *you*, that I will not *seek*. But what is next?

I then gave into her hand the copy of my aunt Selby's answer.

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Miss Gr. May I read it all?

Har. If you please: the fondness of my aunt, and the partiality of——

Miss Gr. Away, away, Harriet!—No affectation, child!

She read it out. Both sisters praised the heart of the dear and thrice indulgent writer; and called her *their* aunt Selby.

I then gave Miss Grandison the countess's second letter. They were no less pleased with that than with the first.

Miss Gr. But now your opinion of the proposal, child? Will you trust us with that? Have you a copy of what you wrote?

Har. I kept a copy only of what immediately respected the proposal; and that, because it was possible I might want to have recourse to it, as my aunt might, or might not, write farther about it.

I took it out of my pocket-book, and gave it to her to read.

Thank you, child, said she: I should have no curiosity, if I did not love you.

She read it out: it was the paragraph that begins with, 'You will, upon the strength of what I have said,' &c.—ending with, '*Such is my meaning.*'—Luckily, I had not transcribed the concluding sentence of that paragraph; having been ashamed of the odd words, *hope of your hope.*

Lady L. But *why* should that be your *meaning*, my dear?

Har. I added, I remember, that I was pained by the teasing of these men, one after another; that I never took delight in the airy adulation; and was now the more pained, because of the vile attempt of Sir Hargrave, which had given me a surfeit of the sex.

Miss Gr. A temporary surfeit! It is over, I hope, by this time.—But, my dear—And yet, as I owe to your generosity the communication, I would not take occasion from it to tease you——

Har. Miss Grandison will oblige me, say what she pleases.

Miss Gr. As you intend to marry—As your friends are very desirous that you *should*—As Lady D—— is an excellent woman—As her son is, as men go, a tolerable man—As he is a peer of the realm; which is something in the scale, though it is not of weight, singly considered—As his estate is very considerable—As you may have your own terms—

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As you like not any one of your numerous admirers:—All these *as's* considered, why, why, in the name of goodness, should you give so flat a denial? Yet have not seen the gentleman, and therefore *can* have no dislike either to his sense or person? I wish, my dear, you will give such a reason for your denial, a denial so *strongly* expressed, as one would imagine such a woman as the countess of D—— would be satisfied with, from such a one as Miss Byron.

Lady L. Perhaps, now that Miss Byron has seen what a lady the Countess of D—— is——

Miss Gr. And now that she has overcome the *temporary surfeit*——

Lady L. She will change her mind.

[Are you not, my dear aunt Selby, are you not, my Lucy, distressed for me at this place? I was at the time greatly so for *myself.*]

Har. My mind has been disturbed by Sir Hargrave's violence; and by apprehensions of fatal mischiefs that might *too* probably have followed the generous protection given me: wonder not, therefore, ladies, if I am unable, on a sudden, to give such reasons for having refused to listen to Lady D——'s proposal, as you require; although, at the same time, I find not in my heart the least inclination to encourage it.

Miss Gr. You *have* had your difficulties of late, my Harriet, to contend with: and those you must look upon as a tax to be paid by a merit so conspicuous. Even in this slighter case, as you love to oblige, I can pity you for the situation you are likely to be in, betwixt the refused son and the deserving mother. But when you consider, that the plagues of the discreet proceed from other people, those of the indiscreet from themselves, you will sit down with a just compliment to yourself, and be content. You see I can be grave now and then, child.

Har. May I *deserve* to be called prudent and discreet! On that condition I am willing to incur the penalty.

Lady L. Come, come; that is out of the question, my dear: so you are contented of course, or in the way to be so.

The ladies took their leave, and seemed pleased with their visit.

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It is now, my dear friends, somehow or other, become necessary, I think, to let you minutely into my situation, that you may advise, caution, instruct me—For, I protest, I am in a sort of wilderness.—Pray, my Lucy, tell me—But it cannot be from *love:* so I don't care—Yet to lie under such a weight of obligation; and to find myself so much surpassed by these ladies—Yet it is not from *envy*, surely: that is a very bad passion. I hope my bosom has not a place in it for such a mean self-tormentor. Can it be from *pride?* Pride is a vice that always produces mortification: and proud you all made me of your favour—Yet I thought it was grateful to be proud of it.

[I wish I were with you, Lucy. I should ask you abundance of questions; and repose my anxious heart on your faithful bosom; and, at the same time, from your answers, arm it against too great a sensibility before it is too late.

But, pray, don't I remember, that you said, you found sighing a relief to you, on a certain occasion?—I am serious, my dear. That there was a sort of you know not what of *pleasure* in sighing? Yet that it was involuntary?—Did you not say that you were ready to quarrel with yourself, you knew not why?—And, pray, had you not a fretting, gnawing pain in your stomach, that made you—I can't tell how to describe it; yet were humble, meek, as if looking out for pity from everybody, and ready to pity everybody?—Were you not attentive to stories of people, young women especially, labouring under doubts and difficulties?—Was not your humanity raised? your self-consequence lowered? But did you not think *suspense* the greatest of all torments?—I think, my dear, you lived without eating or drinking; yet looked not pining, but fresh.—Your rest—I remember it was broken. In your sleep you seemed to be disturbed. You were continually rolling down mountains, or tumbling from precipices—or were borne down by tempests, carried away with sudden inundations; or sinking in deep waters; or flying from fires, thieves, robbers——

How apt are we to recollect, or to *try* to recollect, when we are apprehensive that a case may possibly be our own, all those circumstances, of which, while another's (however dear that other might be to us), we had not any clear or

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adequate ideas!—But I know that, such of these as I recollect not from *you*, must be owing to the danger, to the terror, I was in from the violence of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen. Often and often do I dream over again what I suffered from him. I am now imploring mercy from him; and meet with nothing but upbraidings and menaces. He is now stopping my mouth with his handkerchief: his horrible clergyman, if a clergyman he was, is reading the service quite through: and I am contending against the legality of the asserted marriage. At other times, I have escaped; and he is pursuing me: he gains upon my flying feet; and I wake myself with endeavouring in vain to cry out for help.

But when fancy is more propitious to me, then comes my rescuer, my deliverer: and he is sometimes a mighty prince (dreams then make me a perfect romancer), and I am a damsel in distress. The milk-white palfrey once came in. All the marvellous takes place; and lions and tigers are slain, and armies routed, by the puissance of his single arm.

Now, do not these reveries convince you, that I owe all my uneasiness to what I suffered from Sir Hargrave's barbarity? I think I must take my aunt's advice; leave London; and then I shall better find out, whether, as all my friends suspect, and as, to be ingenuous, I myself now begin sometimes to fear, a passion stronger than gratitude has not taken hold of my heart. Of this I am sure; my reasoning faculties are weakened. Miss Grandison says, that, in my illness at Colnebrook, I was delirious; and that the doctor they called in was afraid of my head: and should I suffer myself to be *entangled in a hopeless passion*, there will want no further proof, that my reason has suffered.]

Adieu, my Lucy! What a letter have I written! The conclusion of it, I doubt, will, of itself, be a sufficient evidence of the weakness I have mentioned, both of head and heart, of your HARRIET.

On perusal of the latter part of this letter [which I have enclosed in hooks], if you can avoid it, Lucy, read it not before my uncle.

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LETTER LI.

Miss Harriet Byron to Miss Lucy Selby.

Saturday, March 4.

THIS morning Sir Hargrave Pollexfen made Mr. Reeves a visit. He said it was to him; but I was unluckily below; and forced to hear all he had to say, or to appear unpolite.

He proposed visiting my grandmamma and aunt Selby, in order to implore their forgiveness. But Mr. Reeves diverted him from thinking of that.

He had not sought me, he said, at Lady Betty Williams's, but from his desire (on the character he had heard of me), to pay his addresses to me in preference to every other woman. He had laid out for several opportunities to get into my company, before he heard I was to dine there. Particularly, he once had resolved to pay a visit in form to my uncle Selby, in Northamptonshire, and had got all his equipage in readiness to set out; but heard that I was come to town with Mr. and Mrs. Reeves. He actually then set out, he said, for Peterborough, with intent to propose the affair to my godfather Deane: but found that he was gone to Cambridge; and then being resolved to try his fate with me, he came to town; and hardly questioned succeeding, when he understood that my friends left me to my own choice: and knowing that he could offer such proposals, as none of the gentlemen who had made pretensions to me were able to make. His intentions, therefore, were not sudden, and such as arose upon what he saw of me at Lady Betty Williams's; though the part I supported in the conversation there precipitated his declaration.

He was very unhappy, he said, to have so mortally disobliged me; and repeated all his former pleas; his love [rough love, I am sure], compassion, sufferings, and I cannot tell what; insisting, that he had forgiven much greater injuries, as was but *too* apparent.

I told him, that I had suffered more than he could have done, though his hurt was more visible than mine: that, nevertheless, I forgave him; as no bad consequences had

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followed between him and my protector—[Protector! muttered he]—But that he knew my mind before he made that barbarous attempt: and I besought him never more to think of me; and he must excuse me to say, that this must be the very last time I ever would see him.

A great deal was said on both sides; my cousins remaining attentively silent all the time: and at last he insisted that I would declare, that I never would be the wife either of Mr. Greville or Mr. Fenwick: assuring me, that the rash step he had taken to make me his, was owing principally to his apprehension that Mr. Greville was more likely to succeed with me than any other man.

I owned him, I told him, no such declaration. But Mr. Reeves, to get rid of his importunity, gave it as his opinion, that there was no ground for his apprehensions that I would give my hand to either; and I did not contradict him.

Mr. Bagenhall and Mr. Jordan, before I could get away from this importunate man, came to inquire for him. He then owned, that they came in hope of seeing me; and besought me to favour him and them for one quarter of an hour only.

I was resolved to withdraw: but, at Sir Hargrave's command, as impertinently given as officiously obeyed, Mr. Reeves's servant led them (his master indeed not contradicting) into the parlour where we were.

The two strangers behaved with great respect. Never did men run praises higher, than both these gentlemen gave to Sir Charles Grandison. And indeed the subject made me easier in their company than I should otherwise have been.

It is not possible, I believe, for the vainest mind to hear itself profusely praised without some pain: but it is surely one of the sweetest pleasures in the world, to hear a whole company join in applauding the absent person who stands high in our opinion: and especially if he be one to whose unexceptional goodness we *owe*, and are not ashamed to *own*, obligation.

What further pleased me, was to hear Mr. Bagenhall declare, which he did in a very serious manner, that Sir Charles Grandison's *great* behaviour, as he justly called it, had made such impressions not only upon him, but upon

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Mr. Merceda, that they were both determined *to turn over a new leaf,* was his phrase; and to live very different lives from what they *had* lived; though they were far, they blessed God, from being before the worst of men.

These gentlemen, with Mr. Merceda and Sir Hargrave, are to dine with Sir Charles to-day. They both mentioned it with great pleasure; but Sir Hargrave did not seem so well pleased, and doubted of his being able to persuade himself to go.

The invitation was given at Mr. Jordan's motion, who took hold of a slight invitation of Sir Charles's; Mr. Jordan declaring, that he resolved not to let slip any opportunity of improving an acquaintance with so extraordinary a man.

Sir Hargrave talked of soon leaving the town, and retiring to one of his country-seats; or of going abroad, for a year or two, if he must have no hopes—Hopes! a wretch!——

Yet he showed so much dejection, and is so really mortified with the damage done to a face that he used to take pleasure to see reflected in the glass (never once looking into either of those in the parlour he was in all the time he stayed), that I could once or twice have been concerned for him: but when I seriously reflect, I do not know whether this mortification is not the happiest thing that could have befallen him. It wants only to be attended with patience.—He is not *now* an ugly man in his person. His estate will always give him consequence. He will now think the better of others; and the worse of himself: he *may, much* worse; and not want as much vanity as comes to his share.

But say you, my uncle (as I fancy you do), that I also may spare some of *my* vanity, and not be the worse girl?—Ah! no! I am now very sensible of my own defects. I am poor, low, silly, weak—Was I ever insolent? Was I ever saucy? Was I ever—oh, my uncle, hide my faults! I am mortified. Let me not reproach myself with having *deserved* mortification. If I did, I knew it not. I intended not to be saucy, vain, insolent—And if I was so, lay it to a flow of health, and good spirits; to time of life; young, gay, and priding myself in every one's love; yet most in the love, in the fond indulgence, of all you, my good friends: and then you will have some of my faults to lay at your own doors; nor will you, even *you,* my uncle, be clear of reproach, because

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your correction was always mingled with so much praise, that I thought you were but at play with your niece, and that you levelled your blame more at the sex than at your Harriet.

But what have I written against myself! I believe I am *not* such a low, silly, weak creature, as I had thought myself. For just as I had laid down my pen with a pensive air, and to look into the state of my own heart, in order either to lighten, or to confirm, the self-blame I had so glibly written down, Lady L——, in her chair, made us a visit. She came up directly to me: I am come to dine with your cousins and you, Miss Byron, said she. Shall I be welcome? But don't answer me. I know I shall.

Mrs. Reeves entered, and acknowledged the favour.

Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, and some of his brethren, are to dine with my brother, said my lady; and I, not being obliged to do the honours of the table, with my lord's consent, made my escape. I cannot endure the wretch, who could make such a vile attempt upon you, and who might have murdered my brother.—Come, will you let me see what you are writing? You can forgive *Charlotte's* freedom: will you excuse her *sister's?*

I cannot show your ladyship *all* I have written; but I will read you some passages of the long letter before me.

I told her my subject, and read to her such as I thought I could read. She raved at Sir Hargrave: wondered he had the confidence to approach me, especially with hope. She praised me. Yet said to my cousin Reeves, that he ought to have been denied the house; and the rather, as I was myself very unwilling to see him.

I own, I thought so too. Both my cousins are *too* good-natured.

We had a great deal of talk about the duel that was so happily prevented. Lady L—— gave us an account of that which her father fought; and to the issue of which they owed the loss of the best of mothers: and at and after dinner she piously expatiated on the excellences of that mother; and demonstrated, what I have often thought of great consequence (my grandmamma's and aunt Selby's examples before me affording the noblest proofs), that the conduct of

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women in their families is of high importance; and that they need not look out of them so often as they do, to employ themselves; and that not only in the most useful, but in the most delightful manner.

My Lord L—— having broke from the company at Sir Charles's, did us the honour to drink tea with us. Everything, he said, passed very agreeable among the gentlemen he had left; and it was his opinion, that his brother's noble behaviour, and the conversation that passed at table, and in which he left him and them engaged, would make more than one convert among them.

He told Lady L—— that Sir Charles was to set out on Monday for Canterbury [for Canterbury, Lucy]; and that he should take it for a favour, if she would give him her company for a few days to Colnebrook. Their new house, he said, would be ready to receive them in a week's time: it wanted nothing but a thorough airing. And if, said he, you could prevail upon Miss Grandison to be with us till her brother returns, and both sisters could induce Miss Byron to make a fourth, we shall be the happiest party in the world; and perhaps may get Sir Charles among us, on his return, for a day or two. I bowed.

I must tell you, my lord, that Charlotte and I thought to offer our attendance on Miss Byron to some of the public entertainments: but your Lordship's pleasure shall determine me; and if we could be so happy as to have Miss Byron for our guest, I am sure of my sister; and it would be my preferable wish. Mr. Reeves, Mrs. Reeves, will you spare Miss Byron to me?

I looked as if for their leave. They gave a smiling assent. My lord and lady both expressed themselves overjoyed.

This Canterbury ran in my head. It was brought in naturally enough; and Mr. Reeves wondered, that Sir Charles kept secret the motive of his journeying thither backward and forward. *The godlike man,* said Mr. Reeves, in the words of a great poet, *has nothing to conceal.* For my part, replied my lord, I conclude the motive is rather a painful than a pleasurable one. Charlotte accuses her brother of reserves. I never found him reserved: but he loves to

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play with her curiosity, and amuse her: for she is very curious, yet has *her* secret.—Has she not, Lady L——?

Indeed she has, replied my lady—Perhaps you, my dear, will be intrusted with it, when you are at Colnebrook together.

Pray, madam, said I to Lady L——, may I ask?—Does Sir Charles give Lord G—— his interest in his addresses to Miss Grandison?

Lady L. My brother wishes Charlotte married. He is a great friend to the married state; especially with regard to our sex.

Mr. Reeves could not miss this opportunity. It is a wonder, said he, that Sir Charles himself does not think of marriage?

Lady L. That is a string that we but just touch sometimes, and away. There is a Lady——

There she stopt. Had she looked with earnestness at me, I had been undone, I believe.

[☛ Let me ask you, Lucy: you have passed the fiery ordeal—Did you ever find in yourself a kind of impatience, next to petulance; and in your heart (only for fear of exposing yourself), that you were ready to quarrel, or to be short, with anybody that came upon you of a sudden; yet have no business of consequence to engage either your fingers or your thoughts?—Of late, my dear, I have been very often troubled with this odd sensation. But my whole temper is altering, I believe. I shall grow peevish, perverse, and gloomy, I doubt. Oh this wicked Sir Hargrave! ☚]

Pray, my dear, attend for the future to those indexes or hands; and forbear to read out the passages enclosed by them, if you can—But if you come upon them before you are aware, why then read on—with all my heart.

But to return to Lady L——'s alarming hint—'There 'is a lady'——

Mrs. Reeves. That Sir Charles loves, I suppose?

Lady L. That loves Sir Charles; and she has—But for the lady's sake—Yet, if it be allowable for any woman to be in love with any man, upon an uncertainty of return, it is for one that is in love with my brother.

Har. And cannot Sir Charles make a return?—Poor lady!

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My cousin afterwards told me, that my upper-lip then quivered like an aspin-leaf. I did not know that it did. I felt not a trembling at my heart; and when the lip trembles, the heart, I think, should be affected. There used to be a close connexion between mine.

Mr. Reeves. Miss Grandison told *me*, that, if her brother married, half a score women would break their hearts.

Lady L. The words *half a score* run as glibly off the tongue as *half a dozen:* but I believe, let the envious, the censorious, malign our sex, and charge us with the love of rakes and libertines, as they will, if all men were like my brother, there would not be a single woman, and hardly a bad one, in the kingdom. What say you, my lord?

Lord L. My dear life, you know I am all attention, whenever you, or my sister Charlotte, make our brother the subject of your panegyric. If, Miss Byron, you do not choose to hear so much said of this best of men, you will, I doubt, have an ill time of it in the favour you will do us at Colnebrook.

Har. My lord, I should be very ungrateful, if I did not hear with pleasure everything that shall be said in praise of Sir Charles Grandison.

Lord L. When I am out of conceit with men, as too often they give me cause to be, I think of my brother, and forgive them.

I wonder, Lucy, what everybody *means* by praising Sir Charles Grandison so much in my hearing!—Shall I fly from town, to avoid hearing his praises?—Yes, say you?—But whither? It must not be to Selby House. Well then, I may as well go to Colnebrook. I shall then be informed of the reasons for all those general applauses; for hitherto I know nothing of his history to what they tell me I am to know.

These general praises carried us away from a subject that I thought we should once have made more of—*That one lady*—And I wanted to know, but had no opportunity to inform myself, whether that lady's relations, or herself, live at Canterbury. On Monday, it seems, Sir Charles sets out for *that* Canterbury!

Our noble guests would not stay supper. They had not

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been gone two hours before I had an humorous letter from Miss Grandison. I enclose it.

—o—

Saturday Night, 10 *o'clock.*

LORD and LADY L—— rejoice me, by telling me, you will accompany them to Colnebrook on Monday.—That's my good girl!—I will go with them, for the sake of your company. Yet I had half denied them: and why? Because, if you must know—but hush—and catch a mouse—Because, a certain impertinent proposes a visit there; and I had thoughts to take the opportunity of being alone in town, to rid my hands for ever, if possible, of another silly fellow, of whom, for one *month*, a great while ago, I thought tolerably.

You and I, Harriet, will open to each other all our hearts. There is one chamber that has two beds in it. We will have that. Our dressing-room shall be common to both. Lady L—— is a *morning-killer:* she always loved her bed: so we shall have charming opportunities for *tête-à-tête* conversation.

I will drink tea with you to-morrow—No, but I won't: you and your cousins shall drink tea with us—Do you hear? I won't be denied. And then we'll settle how it shall be. I'll tell you what, my dear.—If, on my brother's return from Canterbury, he comes to us at Colnebrook, we will call him to account for all his reserves. Here is this affair of Pollexfen's: how might it have ended! I tremble to think of it—You'll stand by me: won't you? I cannot make Lord and Lady L—— of my party, or I would have rebelled before now—But you and I, my dear, I warrant you—Yet you are so grave. Were you always such a grave, such a wise, such a *very* wise girl, Harriet? Was your grandfather a very sententious man? Was his name *Solomon* Shirley?

I love wisdom as well as anybody: but wisdom, out of its place, is a prude, my dear. How I ramble!—You'll come to-morrow—I designed but two lines. Adieu. Believe me ever yours, C. G.

I hope, Lucy, I was not wrong in so readily consenting to

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go to Colnebrook. My own inclination, indeed, was in my compliance; and I begin to mistrust myself, wherever that strongly leads. Yet why should I undervalue myself? I know my heart to be good. In that I will not yield to anybody. I have no littleness in my mind: *naturally* I have not. Guard me, oh my friends! by your prayers, that no littleness, that is *not* natural to my heart, may depreciate it, and make me unworthy of the love you have ever shown to your

HARRIET BYRON.

—o—

LETTER LII.

Miss Harriet Byron to Miss Lucy Selby.

Sunday, March 5.

MY cousin will have it, that I am far gone in a certain passion [*they* speak quite out]; and with a man that has given no encouragement—Encouragement! how meanly sounds that word! But I hope they are mistaken. I cannot say, but I might prefer, if I were to have my choice—one man to another—But that is a different thing from being run away with by so *vehement* a folly as they are ready to ascribe to me.

Well, but, under this notion, they are solicitous that I should not neglect any opportunity [what a poor creature do they think me]! of *ingratiating* myself with the sisters; and therefore I must, by all means, accept of Miss Grandison's invitation to tea.

I insisted, however, that they should accompany me, as they likewise were invited: and they obliged me—I may say *themselves* too; for they admire the brother and sisters as much as I do.

We found together Lord and Lady L——, Miss Grandison, Miss Jervois, Dr. Bartlett, and Mr. Grandison. Sir Charles was in his drawing-room adjoining to the study; a lady with him, they said. What business had I to wish to know whether it was an elderly or a young lady? But I must tell you all my follies. When we alighted, a very genteel chair made way for our coach.

Mr. Grandison made up to me; and, as heretofore, said

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very silly things, but with an air, as if he were accustomed to say such, and to have them received as gallant things, by those to whom he addressed them. How painful it is to a mind not quite at ease, to be obliged to be civil, when the ear is invaded by contemptible speeches, from a man who must think as highly of himself for uttering them, as meanly of the understanding of the person he is speaking to!

Miss Grandison saw me a little uneasy, and came up to us. Mr. Grandison, said she, I thought you had known Miss Byron's character by this time. She is something more than a pretty woman. She has a *soul*, sir: the man who makes a compliment to her on her beauty, depreciates her understanding.

She then led me to her seat, and sat down next me.

Mr. Grandison was in the midst of a fine speech, and was not well pleased. He sat down, threw one leg over the knee of the other, hemmed three or four times, took out his snuff-box, tapped it, let the snuff drop through his fingers, then broke the lumps, then shut it, and twirled it round with the fore-finger of his right hand, as he held it between the thumb and fore-finger of the other; and was quite like a sullen boy: yet, after a while, tried to recover himself, by forcing a laugh at a slight thing or two said in company that was not intended to raise one.

I think, my dear, I could have allowed a little more for him, had not his name been Grandison.

We soon adjusted everything for the little journey. Mr. Grandison told Miss Grandison, that if she would make him amends for her treatment of him just now, she should put Lord L—— upon inviting *him*. Lord and Lady L—— joined to do so. But Miss Grandison would not admit of his going; and I was glad of it.

But, not to affront you, cousin, said she, Miss Byron and I want to have a good deal of particular conversation: so shall not be able to spare *you* an hour of our company at Colnebrook. But one thing, sir: my brother sets out for Canterbury to-morrow: tell him that *we* won't be troubled with your company: ask him, if *he* will.

Not in those words neither, cousin Charlotte: but I will offer attendance; and, if he accepts of it, I shall be

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half as happy as if I went to Colnebrook; and *only* half, bowing to me.

Why, now, you are a good docible kind of a man! I want to hear what will be my brother's answer: for we know not one syllable, nor can guess at his business at Canterbury.

The tea-equipage being brought in, we heard Sir Charles's voice, complimenting a lady to her chair; and who pleaded engagement for declining to drink tea with his sister. And then he entered the parlour to us. He addressed my cousins, who were next him, with his usual politeness. He then came to me: How does my good Miss Byron? Not discomposed, I hope, by your yesterday's visitors. They are all of them in love with you. But you must have been pained —I was pained for you, when I heard they had visited you. But extraordinary merit has some forfeitures to pay.

I am sure then, thought I, you must have a great many. Every time I see him, I think he rises upon me in the gracefulness of his behaviour.

I have one agreeable piece of news to tell you, madam. Sir Hargrave will go abroad for a twelvemonth. He says, he cannot be in the same kingdom with you, and not see you. He hopes, therefore, to lessen the torment by flying from the temptation. Mr. Bagenhall and Mr. Merceda will go with him.

Then whispering me, he said, from a hint in the letter of the penitent Wilson, that Mr. Bagenhall's circumstances are not happy, and that he is too much in the power of Sir Hargrave; I have prevailed on the latter, in consideration of the other's accompanying him abroad, to make him easy. And, would you believe it? and can you forgive me?—I have brought Sir Hargrave to consent to give Wilson the promised 100*l.* To induce him to do this, Merceda (influenced by the arguments I urged, founded on the unhappy fellow's confessions in that letter) offered 50*l.* more for his past services to himself: and both, as a proof of the sincerity of the promised reformation. Wilson shall not have the money, but upon his marrying the girl to whom he is contracted: and on my return from a little excursion I am making to Canterbury, I shall put all in a train. And now,

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let me ask you, once more, can you forgive me for *rewarding*, as you may think it, a base servant?

Oh, sir! how can I answer you?—You told me at Colnebrook that we were to endeavour to bring good out of the evil from which you had delivered me. This indeed is making your words true in a very extensive sense: to make your enemies your friends; to put wicked men into a way of reformation; and to make it a bad man's interest to be good—*Forgive* you, sir!—From what I remember of that poor wretch's letter, I was obliged to him myself: though vile, he was less vile than he might have been. The young woman behaved with tenderness to me at Paddington: let me therefore add 50*l.* to Mr. Merceda's 50*l.* as an earnest that I can follow a noble example.

You charm me, madam, said he; I am not disappointed in my opinion of you—Wilson, if he give hope of real penitence, shall not want the fourth 50*l.*—It would be *too good* in you, so great a sufferer as you were by his wickedness, to give it: but it will become a man to do it, who has not been injured by him, and who was the occasion of his losing the favour of his employer; and the rather, as he was an adviser to his fellow-agents to fly, and not to fire at my servants, who might have suffered from a *sturdier* villain. He has promised repentance and reformation: this small sum will give me a kind of right to enforce the performance.—But no more of this just now.

Miss Jervois just then looking as if she would be glad to speak with her guardian, he arose, and taking her hand, led her to the window. She was in a supplicating attitude, as if asking a favour. He seemed to be all kindness and affection to her—Happy girl!—Miss Grandison, who had heard enough of what he said of Wilson to be affected, whispered me, Did I not tell you, Harriet, that my brother was continually employed in doing good? He has invention, forecast, and contrivance: but you see how those qualities are all employed.

O Miss Grandison, said I, I am such a nothing!—I cannot, as Sir Hargrave says, bear my own littleness.

Be quiet, said she—You are an exceeding good girl! But you have a monstrous deal of pride. Early I saw that.

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You are not half so good as the famous Greek, who losing an election for which he stood, to be one of three hundred only, thanked the gods that there were in Athens (I think it was) three hundred better men than himself. Will you not have honour enough, if it can be said, that *next* to Sir Charles Grandison you are the best creature in the world?

Sir Charles led his ward to a seat, and sat down by us.

Cousin Charlotte, said Mr. Grandison, you remember your treatment of me, for addressing Miss Byron in an open, and, I thought, a very polite manner: pray where's *your* impartiality? Sir Charles has been shut up in his study with a lady, who would not be seen by anybody else. But Sir Charles may do anything.

I am afraid it is too late, cousin, said Miss Grandison, else it would be worth your while to try for a reputation.

Has Charlotte, Mr. Grandison, said Sir Charles, used you ill? Ladies will do as they please with you gallant men. They look upon you as their own; and you wish them to do so. You must bear the inconvenience for the sake of the convenience.

Well, but, Sir Charles, I am refused to be of the Colnebrook party—absolutely refused. Will *you* accept of my company? Shall I attend you to Canterbury?

Are you in earnest, cousin Grandison? Will you oblige me with your company?

With all my heart and soul, Sir Charles.

With all mine, I accept your kind offer.

This agreeably surprised his sisters as well as me: but why then so secret, so reserved, to them?

Mr. Grandison immediately went out to give orders to his servant for the journey.

A good-natured man! said Sir Charles.—Charlotte, you are sometimes too quick upon him—Are you not?

Too quick upon him!—No, no! I have hopes of him; for he can be ashamed: that was not always the case with him. Between your gentleness and my quickness, we shall make something of him in time.

Mr. Grandison immediately returned; and we lost something that Sir Charles was going to reply. But, by some

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words he dropt, the purport was to blame his sister for not sparing Mr. Grandison before company.

I imagine, Sir Charles, that if you take Mr. Grandison with you, one may venture to ask a question, Whether you go to any family at Canterbury that we have heard of?—It is to do good, I am sure.

Your eyes have asked me that question several times, Charlotte. I aim not at making secrets of anything I do. I need not on this occasion. Yet you, Charlotte, have your secrets.

He looked grave.

Have I my secrets, Sir Charles?—Pray what do you mean?

She coloured, and seemed sensibly touched.

Too much emotion, Charlotte, is a kind of confession. Take care. Then turning it off with a smile—See, Mr. Grandison, I am revenging your cause. Alarming spirits love not to be alarmed.

So, Harriet! (whispering to me) I am silenced. Had I told you all my heart, I should have half suspected you. How he has fluttered me!—Lady L——, this is owing to you, whispering her behind my chair.

I know nothing; therefore could tell nothing. Conscience, conscience! Charlotte, re-whispered Lady L——.

She sat still, and was silent for a little while; Lord and Lady L—— smiling, and seeming to enjoy her agreeable confusion. At last—but, Sir Charles, you *always* had secrets. You got out of me two or three of mine, without exchange—You——

Don't be uneasy, my Charlotte. I expected a *prompt*, not a *deliberate* reply. My life is a various life. Some things I had better not have known myself. See, Charlotte, if you are serious, you will make me so. I have not any motives of action, I hope, that are either capricious or conceited—[Surely, Lucy, he cannot have seen what I wrote to you, about his reserves! I thought he looked at me]—Only this one hint, my sister: whenever you condescend to consult me, let me have everything before me that shall be necessary to enable me to form a judgment—But why so grave, Charlotte? Impute all I have said, as a revenge of

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Mr. Grandison's cause, in gratitude for his obliging offer of accompanying me to Canterbury.

Cannot you reward *him*, Sir Charles, but by punishing *me?*

A good question, Charlotte. But do you take what I have said in that light?

I have done for the present, sir: but I hope, when you return, we shall come to an eclaircissement.

Needs it one?—Will not better and more interesting subjects have taken place by that time?—And he looked at her with an eye of particular meaning.

Now is he beginning to wind about me, whispered she to me, as I told you at Colnebrook: were he and I alone, he'd have me before I knew where I was. Had he been a wicked man, he would have been a *very* wicked one.

She was visibly uneasy; but was afraid to say any more on the subject.

Lady L—— whispered—Ah! Charlotte, you are taken in your own toils. You had better let me into your secret. I would bring you off if I could.

Be quiet, Lady L——.

We then talked of the time in the morning of our setting out for Colnebrook. I thought I read Miss Emily's mind in her eyes—Shall we not have the pleasure of Miss Jervois's company? said I to the sisters.

Emily bowed to me, and smiled.

The very thing that Miss Jervois was petitioning to me for, said Sir Charles: and I wished, ladies, to have the motion come from one of you.

Emily shall go with us, I think, said Miss Grandison.

Thank you, madam, said she: I will take care not to break in upon you impertinently.

What! dost *thou* too think we have secrets, child?

Consent with your usual grace, Charlotte: Are you not too easily affected? Sir Charles spoke this smiling.

Everything you say, Sir Charles, affects me.

I ought then to be very careful of what I say. If I have given my sister pain, I beg her to forgive me.

I am afraid to go on, whispered she to me. Were he and I only together, my heart would be in his hand in a moment.

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I have only this to observe, Miss Grandison, whispered I—When you are too hard upon me, I know to whom to apply for revenge.

Such another word, Harriet, and I'll blow you up!

What could she mean by that?—*Blow me up?* I have locked up my aunt's last letters, where so much is said about *entangling*, and *inclination*, and so forth. When anything occurs that we care not to own, I see by Miss Grandison that it is easy for the slightest hint to alarm us.

But Sir Charles to say so seriously as he did, 'That his 'life was a various life;' and that 'he had better not have 'known some things himself,' affects me not a little. What can a man of his prudence have had to disturb him? But my favourite author say—

> Yet, with a sigh o'er all mankind, I grant,
> In this our *day of proof*, our *land of hope*,
> The good man has his clouds that intervene,
> Clouds that *obscure* his sublunary day;
> But never conquer. E'en the best must own,
> *Patience* and *resignation* are the pillars
> Of human peace on earth.—— NIGHT THOUGHTS.

But so young a man! so prudent! as I said; and so generally beloved! But that he is so, may be the occasion. —Some lady, I doubt!—What sad people are we women at this rate! Yet some women may have the worst of it. What are your thoughts on all these appearances, Lucy?

Miss Grandison, as I said, is uneasy. These are the words that disturb her: 'Only this one hint, my sister! When-'ever you condescend to consult me, let me have everything 'before me that shall be necessary to enable me to form a 'judgment.'—And so they would *me* in her case.

But it seems plain, from Sir Charles's hint, that he keeps to himself (as Miss Grandison once indeed said in his favour) those intelligences which would disturb her, and his other friends, to know. The secret which he would have made of the wicked challenge; his self-invited breakfasting with Sir Hargrave; are proofs, among others, of this: and if this be his considerate motive, what a forward, what a censorious creature have I been, on so many occasions, to blame him for his reserves, and particularly for his Canterbury excur-

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sions! I think I will be cautious for the future how I take upon me to censure those actions which in such a man I cannot account for.

Miss Grandison, on her brother's withdrawing with Dr. Bartlett, said, Well, now that my cousin Grandison will accompany my brother to Canterbury, we shall have that secret out in course.

Lady L. It seems to be your fault, Charlotte, that we have not had it before.

Miss Gr. Be quiet, Lady L——.

Mr. Gr. Perhaps not. You'll find I can keep a secret, cousin; especially if I am desired to do so.

Miss Gr. I shall wonder at that.

Mr. Gr. Why so?

Miss Gr. Shall I give it you in plain English?

Mr. Gr. You don't use to mince it.

Miss Gr. It would be strange, cousin, if a man should make a secret of an innocent piece of intelligence, who has told stories of himself, and gloried in them, that he ought, if true, to have been hanged for—You would have it.

Mr. Gr. I knew I must have the plain English, whether I asked for it or not. But give me leave to say, cousin Charlotte, that you made not so superior a figure just now.

Miss Gr. True, Mr. Grandison. There is but one man in the world of whom I stand in awe.

Mr. Gr. I believe it; and hope you never design to marry, for *that* reason.

Miss Gr. What a wretch is my cousin! Must a woman stand in awe of her husband? Whether, sir, is marriage a state of servitude or of freedom to a woman?

Mr. Gr. Of freedom, as women generally make it—of servitude, if they know their duty.—Pardon me, ladies.

Miss Gr. Don't pardon him. I suppose, sir, it is owing to your consciousness, that you have only the *will*, and not the *spirit*, to awe a woman of sense, that you are a single man at this day.

Lady L. Pray, my lord, what have I done, that you treat me with so much contempt?

Lord L. Contempt! my best life!—How is that?

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Lady L. You seem not to think it worth your while to *overawe* me.

Miss Gr. Lord, my dear! how you are mistaken in applying thus to Lord L——! Lord L—— is a good man, a virtuous man. None but rakes hold those *overawing* doctrines. They know what they deserve; and live in continual fear of meeting with their deserts; and so, if they marry, having the hearts of slaves, they become tyrants. Miss Byron——

Mr. Gr. The devil's in it if you two ladies want help. I fly the pit.

Lord L. And I think, Mr. Grandison, you have fought a hard battle.

Mr. Gr. By my soul, I think so too. I have held it out better than I used to do.

Miss Gr. I protest I think you have. We shall brighten you up among us. I am mistaken if there were not two or three smart things said by my cousin. Pray, did anybody mind them? I should be glad to hear them again. Do you recollect them yourself, cousin?

Mr. Gr. You want to draw me on again, cousin Charlotte. But the d—l fetch me, if you do. I'll leave off while I am well.

Miss Gr. Would you have thought it, Lady L——? My cousin has *discretion* as well as *smartness*. I congratulate you, sir: a new discovery!—But hush! 'Tis time for both to have done.

Sir Charles entered. Mr. Grandison a sufferer again? said he.

Mr. Gr. No, no! Pretty well off this bout!—Miss Byron, I have had the better end of the staff, I believe.

Har. I can't say that, sir. But you got off, I think, in very good time.

Mr. Gr. And that's a victory, to what it used to be, I can assure you. Nobody ever could *awe* Miss Grandison.

Miss Gr. Coward!—You would *now* begin again, would you?—Sir Charles loves to take me *down*.

Mr. Gr. Never, madam, but when you are *up:* and laughed heartily.

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Miss Gr. Witty too!—A man of repartee. A *verbal* wit. And that's half as good as a punster, at any time.

Sir Ch. Fight it out, cousin Grandison. You can laugh on, though the laugh of every other person should be against you.

Mr. Gr. And thou, Brutus?—It is time to have done.

As I think these conversations characteristic, I hope the recital of them will be excused. Yet I am sensible, those things that go well off in conversation do not always *read* to equal advantage.

They would fain have engaged us to stay supper: but we excused ourselves. I promised to breakfast with them.

I chose not to take my maid with me. Jenny is to be made over to me occasionally, for the time of my stay. Dr. Bartlett had desired to be excused. So our party is only the two sisters, Lord L——, Miss Jervois, and I.

Sir Charles and Mr. Grandison are to set out for their journey early in the morning.

Adieu, my Lucy. It is late: and sleepiness promises to befriend your HARRIET.

—o—

LETTER LIII.

*Mrs. Selby to Miss Byron.**

Selby House, Sunday, March 5.

MY DEAREST CHILD,—We are all extremely affected with your present situation. Such apparent struggles betwixt your natural openness of heart, and the confessions of a young, of a new passion, and that so laudably founded, and so visibly increasing—oh, my love! you must not affect reserves. They will sit very awkwardly upon a young woman, who never knew what affectation and concealment were.

You have laid me under a difficulty with respect to Lady D——. She is to be with me on Saturday next. I have not written to her, though you desired I would; since, in truth, we all think that her proposals deserve consideration; and

* This letter, and the two that follow it, are inserted in this place, though not received, and answered, till Miss Byron was at Colnebrook, for the sake of keeping entire the subject she writes upon from thence.

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because we are afraid that a greater happiness will never be yours and ours. It is impossible, my dear, to imagine that such a man as Sir Charles Grandison should not have seen the woman whom he could love, before he saw you; or whom he had not been engaged to love by his *gratitude*, as I may call it, for her *love*. Has not his sister talked of half a score ladies who would break their hearts for him were he to marry?—And may not this be the reason why he does not?

You see what an amiable openness of heart there is in the Countess of D——. You see that your own frankness is a particular recommendation of you to her. I had told her, that you were disengaged in your affections: by your own disclaiming to her the proposed relation, you have given reason to so wise a lady to think it otherwise; or that you are not so much above affectation, as she had hoped you were. And though we were grieved to read how much you were pushed by Miss Grandison,* yet Lady D—— will undoubtedly make the same observations and inferences that Miss Grandison did. And what would you have me do? since you cannot give a stronger instance of your affections being engaged than by declining such a proposal as Lady D—— made, before you have conversed with or even seen Lord D——. And it becomes not your character or mine, either to equivocate, or to say the thing that is not.

Lady L—— you think (and indeed it appears) hinted to Lady D——that Sir Charles stands not in the way of Lord D——'s application. I see not, therefore, that there can be any room to hope from that quarter. Nor will your fortune, I doubt, be thought considerable enough. And as Sir Charles is not engaged by affection, and is generous and munificent, there is hardly room to imagine, but that, in prudence, fortune will have some weight with him. At least, on our side, that ought to be supposed, and to make a part of our first proposals, were a treaty to be begun.

Your grandmamma will write to you with her own hand. I refer myself wholly to her. Her wisdom, and her tenderness for you, we all know. She and I have talked of *everything*. Your uncle will not rally you as he has done. We still continue resolved not to prescribe to your inclinations. We

* Letter L., p. 324.

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are afraid, therefore, of advising you as to this new proposal. But your grandmamma is very much pleased that I have not written, as you would have had me, a letter of absolute refusal to the countess.

Your uncle has been inquiring into the state of Sir Charles Grandison's affairs. We have heard so many good things of him, that I have desired Mr. Selby to make no further inquiries, unless we could have some hopes of calling him ours. But do you, my dear, nevertheless, omit nothing that comes to your knowledge, that may let us know in him what a good man is, and should be.

His magnanimity in refusing to engage in a duel, yet acquitting himself so honourably, as to leave no doubt about his courage, is an example, of itself, of a more than human rectitude of thinking and acting. How would your grandfather have cherished such a young man! We every one of us admire and revere him at the same time; and congratulate you, my dear, and his sisters, on the happy issue of the affair between him and that vile Sir Hargrave.

You will let me know your mind as to the affair of Lord D——; and that by the next post. Be not rash: be not hasty. I am afraid I pushed your delicacy too much in my former. Your uncle says, that you are at times not so frank in directly owning your passion, as from your natural openness of heart he expected you would be, when a worthy object had attracted you: and he triumphs over us, in the imagination that he has at last detected you of affectation in some little degree. We all see, and own, your struggle between virgin modesty and openness of heart, as apparent in many passages of your letters; and we lay part of your reserve to the apprehensions you must have of his raillery: but after you have declared, 'That you had rather converse 'but one hour in a week with Sir Charles Grandison' (and *his sister,* you put in: and sisters are good convenient people sometimes to a bashful or beginning lover, of our sex) 'than 'be the wife of any man you have ever seen or known; and 'that mean as the word *pity* sounds, you would rather have 'his pity than the love of any other man?'—Upon my word, my dear, you need not be backward to speak quite out. Excuse me, my child.

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I have just now read the enclosed. Had I known your grandmamma could have written so long a letter, I might have spared much of mine. Hers is worthy of her. We all subscribe to it; but yet will be determined by your next, as to the steps to be taken in relation to the proposal of Lady D——. But if you love, be not ashamed to own it to us. The man is Sir Charles Grandison.

With all our blessings and prayers for you, I bid you, my dear love, adieu. MARIANNA SELBY.

—o—

LETTER LIV.

Mrs. Shirley to Miss Byron.

Sunday, March 5.

DON'T be afraid, don't be ashamed, my dearest life, to open your whole heart to your aunt Selby and me. You know how we all dote upon you. It is no disgrace for a young woman of virtue to be in love with a worthy man. Love is a natural passion. *You* have shown, I am sure, if every young creature did show, that you are no giddy, no indiscreet person. Not Greville, with all his gaiety; not Fenwick, with all his adulation; not the more respectable Orme, with all his obsequiousnes; nor yet the imploring Fowler; nor the terrifying, the shocking Sir Hargrave Pollexfen; have seen the least shadow of vanity or weakness in you. How happily have you steered through difficulties, in which the love of being admired often involves meaner minds? And how have you, with mingled dignity and courteousness, entitled yourself to the esteem, and even veneration, of those whom you refused? And why refused? Not from pride, but principle; and because you could not love any of them, as you thought you ought to love the man to whom you gave your hand.

And at last, when the man appeared to you, who was worthy of your love; who had so powerfully protected you from the lawless attempt of a fierce and cruel pretender; a man who proved to be the best of brothers, friends, landlords, masters, and the bravest and best of men; is it to be wondered at, that a heart, which never before was won, should

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discover sensibility, and acknowledge its fellow heart?—What reason, then, can *you* have for shame? And why seeks my Harriet to draw a curtain between herself and her sympathising friends? You see, my dear, that we are above speaking slightly, because of our uncertainty, of a man that all the world praises. Nor are you, child, so weak as to be treated with such poor policy.

You were not educated, my dear, in artifice. Disguises never sat so ill upon any woman, as they do, in most of your late letters, upon you. Every child in love matters would find you out. But be it your glory, whether our wishes are or are not answered, that your affection is laudable; that the object of it is not a man mean in understanding, profligate in morals, nor sordid in degree; but such an one as all we your friends are as much in love with as you can be. Only, my dear love, my Harriet, the support of my life, and comfort of my evil days, endeavour, for my sake, and for the sake of us all, to restrain so far your laudable inclination, as that, if it be not your happy lot to give us, as well as yourself, so desirable a blessing, you may not suffer in your health (a health so precious to me), and put yourself on a foot with vulgar girls run away with by their headstrong passions. The more desirable the object, the nobler the conquest of your passion, if it is to be overcome. Nevertheless, speak out, my dear, your whole heart to us, in order to entitle yourself to our best advice. And as to your uncle Selby, do not let his raillery pain you: he diverts us as well as himself by it: he gains nothing over us in the arguments he affects to hold with us: and you must know that his whole honest heart is wrapt up in his and our Harriet. Worthy man! He would not, any more than I, be able to support his spirits were any misfortune to befall his niece.

Your aunt Selby has just now shewn me her letter to you. She repeats in it, as a very strong expression in yours, 'That you had rather converse with this excellent man but one hour in a week, than be the wife of any man you have ever seen or known.' It is a strong expression; but, to me, is an expression greatly to your honour; since it shews, that the *mind*, and not the *person*, is the principal object of your love.

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I knew that, if ever you did love, it would be a love of the purest kind. As, therefore, it has not so much *person* in it, as most loves; suffer it not to triumph over your reason; nor, because you cannot have the man you could prefer, resolve against having any other. Have I not taught you, that marriage is a duty, whenever it can be entered into with prudence? What a mean, what a selfish mind must that person have, whether man or woman, who can resolve against entering into the state, because it has its cares, its fatigues, its inconveniences! Try Sir Charles Grandison, my dear, by this rule. If he forbears to marry on such narrow motives, this must be one of his great imperfections. Nor be afraid to try. No man is absolutely perfect.

But Sir Charles may have engagements from which he cannot free himself. My Harriet, I hope, will not give way to a passion, which is not likely to be returned, if she find that to be the case. You hope, you prettily said in one of your letters, 'that you shall not be undone by a *good* man.' After such an escape as you had from Sir Hargrave, I have no fear from a *bad* one: but, my child, if you are undone by a good one, it must be your own fault, while neither he nor his sisters give you encouragement.

I know, my dear, how these suppositions will hurt your delicacy: but then you must doubly guard yourself; for the *reality* will be worse wounding to that delicacy, than the *supposition* ought to be. If there be but one man in the world that can *undo* you, will you not guard against him?

I long to fold my dearest Harriet to my fond heart: but yet this that follows is the advice I give, as to the situation you are now in: lose no opportunity of cultivating the friendship of his amiable sisters. [By the way, if Miss Grandison guesses at your mind, she is not so generous in her raillery as is consistent with the rest of her amiable character.] Never deny them your company, when they request it. Miss Grandison has promised you the history of their family. Exact the performance of that promise from her. You will thus come at further lights, by which you may be guided in your future steps—In particular, you will find out, whether the sisters espouse the interest of any other woman; though Sir Charles's reservedness, even to them, may not let them

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know the secrets of his heart in this particular. And if they do not espouse any other person's interest, why may they not be made *your* friends, my dear?—As to fortune, could we have any hint what would be expected, we would do everything in our power to make that matter easy; and must be content with moderate settlements in your favour.

But as I approve of your aunt's having forborne to write, as you would have had her, to Lady D——, what shall we do in that affair? it will be asked.

What? Why thus: Lady D—— has made it a point, that you are disengaged in your affections: your aunt has signified to her that you are: you have given that lady a hint, which, you say, overclouded her brow. She will be here on Saturday next. Then will she, no doubt, expect the openest dealing.—And she ought to have it. Her own frankness demands it; and the character we have hitherto supported, and I hope always shall support, requires it. I would therefore let Lady D—— know the whole of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen's attempt [you, my dear, was so laudably frank as to *hint* it to her], and of the generous protection given you by Sir Charles Grandison. Truth never leaves room for self-reproach. Let your aunt Selby then own that you had written to her; declining, with the most respectful gratitude, the honour intended you: which she could not otherwise account for than by supposing, and indeed believing, that you would prefer Sir Charles Grandison, from motives of gratitude, to any other man: but that you knew nothing of his engagements; nor had reason to look upon any part of his behaviour to you but as the effect of his general politeness; nor that his sisters meant more by calling you *sister* than their *brother's* sister, as well as *theirs*.

All this shall be mentioned to Lady D—— in *strict confidence*. Then will Lady D—— know the whole truth. She will be enabled, as she *ought*, to judge for herself. You will not appear in her eye as guilty of affectation. We shall all act in character. If Lady L—— and Miss Grandison did (as you suppose) acquaint Lady D—— that you were not addressed by their brother, they will be found to have said the truth; and you know, my dear, that we should be as ready to do justice to others' veracity as to our own. She

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will see that your regard for Sir Charles (if a regard you have, that may be an obstacle to her views) is owing to a laudable gratitude for his protection given to a young woman, whose heart was *before* absolutely disengaged.

And what will be the consequence?—Why, either that her ladyship will think no more of the matter; and then you will be just where you were; or, that she will interest herself in finding out Sir Charles's engagements. And as you have communicated to Lady L—— and Miss Grandison the letters that have passed between Lady D—— and your aunt, together with the contents of yours, so far as relates to the proposal; and as Lady D—— is acquainted with those two ladies; she will probably inform herself of *their* sentiments in relation to the one affair and the other; and the matter, on every side, by this means, will sooner come to a decision than probably it can any other way.

I don't know whether I express myself clearly. I am not what I was: but, blessed be God, that I am what I am! I did not think, that, in so little a time, I could have written so much as I have. But my dear Harriet is my subject; and her happiness is, and has ever been, my only care, since I lost the husband of my youth, the dear man who divided with me that and all my cares; who had a love for you equal to my own; and who, I think, would have given just *such* advice. What would Mr. Shirley have thought? How would he, in the like case, have acted? are the questions I always ask myself, before I give my opinion in any material cases, especially in those which relate to you.

And here let me commend a sentiment of yours, that is worthy of your dear grandfather's pupil: 'I should despise 'myself,' say you, 'were I capable of keeping one man in 'suspense, while I was balancing in favour of another.'

Good young creature, hold fast your principles, whatever befalls you. Look upon this world as you have been taught to look upon it. I have lived to a great age: yet, to look backward to the time of my youth, when I was not a stranger to the hopes and fears that now agitate you, what a short space does it seem to me? Nothing withholds my wishes to be released, but my desire of seeing the darling of my heart, my sweet orphan girl, happy in a worthy man's protection.

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Oh that it could be in—But shall we, my dear, prescribe to Providence? How know we what *that* has designed for Sir Charles Grandison? *His* welfare is the concern of hundreds, perhaps. He, compared to us, is as the public to the private. I hope we are good people: *Comparatively*, I am sure, we are good. That, however, is not the way by which we shall be judged hereafter. But yet, to him, we are but as that private.

Don't think, however, my best love, that I have lived too long to be sensible of what most affects you. Of your pleasures, your pains, I can and do partake. Your late harassings, so tender, so lovely a blossom, cost me many a pang; and still my eyes bear witness to my sensibility, as the cruel scenes are at times read to me again, or as I recall them to memory. But all I mean is, to arm you against feeling too sensibly, when it *is* known, the event which is now hidden in the bosom of Providence, should it, as is but too likely, prove unfavourable.

You have a great deal of writing upon your hands. We cannot dispense with any of that. But if you write to your aunt Selby (as the time till next Saturday is short), that will be writing to us both.

God preserve, direct, and bless my sweet orphan child!—This is the hourly prayer of your ever affectionate grandmother, HENRIETTA SHIRLEY.

—o—

LETTER LV.

Miss Harriet Byron to Mrs. Selby.

Colnebrook, Tuesday, March 7.

I HAVE the favour of yours, and of my dear grandmamma's, just brought me. The contents are so affecting, that though in full assembly, as I may say, in this delightful family, I begged to be permitted to withdraw, to read them. Miss Grandison saw my confusion, my puzzle, what shall I call it? To be charged so home, my dear aunt!—*Such apparent struggles*—And were they, madam, so *very* apparent?—A *young*, a *new passion!*—And so *visibly increasing!*—Pray, madam, if it be *so*, it is not at its height—And is it not, while but in its progress, conquerable?—But have I been

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guilty of *affectation?* of *reserves?*—If I have, my uncle has been very merciful to the *awkward* girl.

And you think it impossible, madam, but *he* has seen women whom he could love, before he saw me? Very likely! But was it kind to turn the word *gratitude* upon me in such a manner?

I do see what an amiable openness of heart there is in Lady D——. I admire her for it, and for her other matronly qualities. What can *you* do, madam? What can *I* do? That is the question, called upon, as I am, by my grandmamma as well as by you, to speak still plainer, plain as in your opinion I had spoken, and indeed in my own, now I read the free sentence, drawn out and separated from the rest of the letter. My grandmamma forgives, and even praises me, for this sentence. She encourages me to speak still plainer. It is no disgrace, she says, for a woman of virtue to be in love with a worthy man. Love is a natural passion, she tells me: yet cautions me against suffering it to triumph over my reason; in short, not to love till there shall be a certainty of return. And so I can love *as I will, when* I will, nay, *whom* I will; for if *he* won't have me, I am desired not to resolve against marrying some other; Lord D——, for example, if *he* will be so good as to have me.

Well, but upon a full examination of my heart, how do I find it, now I am called upon by my two most venerable friends, to *undraw the curtain,* and to *put off the disguises* through which every *child in love matters* finds me out? Shall I speak my whole heart?—To such *sympathising* friends surely I ought. Well, then, I own to you, my honoured grandmamma and aunt, that I cannot think of encouraging any other address. Yet have I no hope. I look upon myself as presumptuous: upon him as too excellent, and too considerable; for he has a great estate, and still greater expectations: and as to personal and intellectual merit, what woman can deserve him!—Even in the article of fortune only, you think that, in prudence, a man so munificent should look higher.

Be pleased therefore, madam, in conformity to my grandmamma's advice, to tell Lady D—— from me, 'That I think 'her laudable openness deserves like openness: that your

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'Harriet *was* disengaged in her affections, absolutely dis-'engaged, when you told her that she was: tell her what 'afterwards happened: tell her how my *gratitude* engaged 'me: that, at first, it was no more; but that now, being 'called upon, on this occasion, I have owned my gratitude 'exalted' [it may not, I hope, be said, *debased*, the object so worthy] 'into—love'—Yes, say *love*—since I act too *awkwardly* in the *disguises* I have assumed; 'that, therefore, I 'can no more in *justice*, than by *inclination*, think of any 'other man: and own to her, that her ladyship has, however, 'engaged my respectful love, even to reverence, by her good-'ness to me in the visit she honoured me with; and that, 'for *her* sake, had I seen nothing objectionable in Lord 'D—— upon an interview, and further acquaintance, I 'could have given ear to this proposal, preferably to any other 'that had yet been made me, were my heart as free as it was 'when she made her first proposal.' And yet I own to you, my venerable friends, that I always think of Mr. Orme with grateful pity, for his humble, for his modest perseverance. What would I give to see Mr. Orme married to some very worthy woman with whom he could be happy!

Finally, bespeak for me her ladyship's favour and friendship; but *not* to be renewed till my lord is married—And may his nuptials be as happy as wished to be by a mother so worthy! But tell her, at the same time, that I would not, or twelve times my lord's 12,000*l.* a year, give my hand to him, or to any man, while another had a place in my heart; however unlikely it is, that I may be called by the name of the man I prefer.

But tell Lady D—— all this in confidence, in the strictest confidence; among more general reasons regarding the delicacy of our sex, for fear the family I am with, who now love, should hate, and what would be still worse, despise your Harriet, for her presumption!—I think I could not bear that!—Don't mind this great blot—Forgive it—It *would* fall—My pen found it, before I saw it.

As to myself; whatever be my lot, I will endeavour to reap consolation from these and other passages in the two precious letters before me:

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'If you love, be not ashamed to own it to *us*—The man 'is Sir Charles Grandison.'

'My affection is laudable: the object of it is a man not 'mean in understanding; nor profligate in morals; nor 'sordid in degree. All my friends are in love with him as 'well as I.'

'My love is a love of the purest kind.'

'And I ought to acquiesce, because Sir Charles, com-'pared to *us*, is as the public to the private. Private con-'siderations, therefore, should be as nothing to me.'

Noble instructions! my dearest two mammas! to which I will endeavour to give their full weight.

And now let me take it a little unkindly, that you call me your *orphan girl!* You two, and my honoured uncle, have supplied all wanting relations to me: my father then, my grandmamma, and my other mamma, continue to pray for, and to bless, not your orphan, but your real, daughter, in all love and reverence,

HARRIET BYRON-SHIRLEY-SELBY.

—o—

LETTER LVI.

Miss Harriet Byron to Miss Lucy Selby.

Colnebrook, Tuesday, March 7.

HERE I am, my dear Lucy, returned to this happy asylum: But with what different emotions from the first time I entered it! How did my heart flutter, when one of Sir Charles's servants, who attended us on horseback, pointed out to us, at the command of the ladies, the very spot where the two chariots met, and the contest began! The recollection pained me: yet do I not owe to that terrifying incident the friendship I am admitted into with so amiable a family?

Miss Grandison, ever obliging, has indulged me in my choice of having a room to myself. I shall have the more leisure for writing to you, my dear friends.

Both she and Lady L—— are very urgent with me to shew them some of the letters in our correspondence; and Miss Grandison says, if that will encourage me to oblige them, they will show me some of their brother's—Who

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would not be tempted by such an exchange? I am more than half afraid—But surely, in such a heap of stuff as I have written, there is something that I can *read* to them. Shall I be permitted, do you think, to have my letters returned me for this purpose? The remarks of these ladies on what I shall think fit to show them, will be of great use in helping to settle my judgment. I know I have thrown out many things at random; and, being a young creature, and not passed the *age of fancy*, have, in all those sentiments which are not borrowed, been very superficial. How can it be otherwise?

The conversation in the coach turned upon their own family (for I put in my claim to Miss Grandison's former promise on that head); from which I gathered the following particulars.

Sir Thomas Grandison was one of the handsomest men of his time: he had a great notion of magnificence in living; and went deep into all the fashionable diversions, except gaming with cards and dice; though he ran into one as expensive, but which he called a nobler vice; valuing himself upon his breed of race horses and hunters, and upon his kennel; in both which articles he was extravagant to profusion.

His father, Sir Charles, was as frugal as Sir Thomas was profuse. He was a purchaser all his life; and left his son, besides an estate of 6000*l.* a year in England, and near 2000*l.* a year in Ireland, rich in money.

His lady was of a noble family; sister to Lord W——. She was, as you have already been told, the most excellent of women. I was delighted to see her two daughters bear testimony to her goodness, and to their own worth, by their tears. It was impossible, in the character of so good a woman, not to think of my own mamma; and I could not help on the remembrance, joining my tears with theirs.

Miss Jervois also wept, not only from tenderness of nature and sympathy, but, as she owned, from regret, that she had not the same reason to rejoice in a living mother, as we had to remember affectionately the departed.

What I have written, and shall farther write, to the disadvantage of Sir Thomas Grandison, I gathered from what

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was dropt by one lady, and by the other at different times; for it was beautiful to observe with what hesitation and reluctance they mentioned any of his failings, with what pleasure his good qualities; heightening the one, and extenuating the other. Oh, my Lucy! how would their hearts have overflowed in his praises, had they had such a faultless father, and excellent man, as was my father! Sweet is the remembrance of good parents to good children!

Lady Grandison brought a great fortune to Sir Thomas. He had a fine poetical vein, which he was fond of cultivating. Though his fortune was so ample, it was his person, and his verses, that won the lady from several competitors. He had not, however, *her* judgment. He was a poet; and I have heard my grandfather say, that to be a poet requires a heated imagination, which often runs away with the judgment.

This lady took the consent of all her friends in her choice; but there seemed a hint to drop from Lady L——, that they consented, *because* it was her choice; for Sir Thomas, from the day he entered upon his estate, set out in a way that everybody concluded would diminish it.

He made, however, a *kind* husband, as it is called. His good sense and his politeness, and the pride he took to be thought one of the best bred men in England, secured her *complaisant* treatment. But Lady Grandison had qualities that deserved one of the best and tenderest of men. Her eye and her ear had certainly misled her. I believe a woman, who chooses a man whom everybody admires, if the man be not good, must expect that he will have calls and inclinations that will make him think the character of a domestic man beneath him.

She endeavoured, at setting out, to engage his—*companionableness*—shall I call it? She was fond of her husband. He had reason to be, and *was*, proud of his wife. But when he had showed her everywhere, and she began to find herself in circumstances, which ought to domesticate a wife of a much gayer turn than Lady Grandison pretended to have, he gave way to his predominant bias; and, after a while, leaving the whole family care to her, for her excellence in every branch of which he was continually praising her (he did her that justice), he was but little at home in the summer; and,

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in the winter, was generally engaged four months in the diversions of this great town; and was the common patron of all the performers, whether at plays, operas, or concerts.

At first setting out in this way, he was solicitous to carry his lady with him to town. She always cheerfully accepted of his invitation, when she saw he was urgent with her to go. She would not give a pretence for so gay a man to throw off that regard to appearances, which pride made him willing to keep up. But afterwards his inclinations growing fainter and fainter, and finding that her presence lengthened the time of his stay in town, and added greatly to his expenses (for he never would abate, when they were together, of that magnificence in which he delighted to live in the country), she declined going up: and having by this time her three children, she found it was as agreeable to Sir Thomas, as to herself, that she should turn her thoughts wholly to the domestic duties. Lady Grandison, when she found that she could not bring Sir Thomas to lessen his great expenses, supposed it to be wisdom to endeavour, to the utmost of her power, to enable him to support them without discredit to himself, or visible hurt to his family. The children were young, and were not likely to make demands upon him for many years to come.

Here was a mother, my dear! Who will say, that mothers may not be the *most* useful persons in the family, when they do their duty, and their husbands are defective in theirs? Sir Thomas Grandison's delights centred in himself; Lady Grandison's in her husband and children. What a superiority! what an inferiority!

Yet had this lady, with the best economy, no narrowness in her heart. She was beloved for her generosity and benevolence. Her poor neighbours adored her. Her table was plenteous. She was hospitable, as well from the largeness of her own heart, as to give credit to her husband; and so far to accommodate herself to his taste, as that too great a difference might not be seen between his absence and presence. As occasions offered, she would confer benefits in the name of a husband, whom, perhaps, she had not seen for months, and knew not whether she might not see for months to come. She was satisfied, though hers was the *first* merit with the

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second merit reflected from that she gave him: 'I am but 'Sir Thomas's almoner: I know I shall please Sir Thomas by 'doing this: Sir Thomas would have done thus. Perhaps *he* 'would have been more bountiful had he been present.'

He had been once absent from this admirable wife six whole months, when he left her but for one: he designed only an excursion to Paris, when he set out; but when in company as gay as himself, while he was there, he executed his tour; and, what was still more inexcusable, he let his lady hear from him by second-hand only. He never wrote one line to her with his own; yet, on his return, affected to surprise her by a sudden appearance, when she knew not that he was in England.

Was not this intolerably vain in him? The moment he appeared, so secure was he of his lady's unmerited love, that he supposed the joy she would break out into would banish from her thoughts all memory of his past unkindness.

He asked her, however, after the first emotions (for she received him with real joy), if she could easily forgive him? —Forgive you, sir?—Yes, if you can forgive yourself.

This he called severe. Well he might; for it was just. Lady Grandison's goodness was founded in principle; not in tameness or servility.

Be not serious, Sir Thomas, said my lady; and flung her arms about him. You know by your question, you were unkind. Not one line from your own hand neither—But the seeing you now safe and well, compensates me for all the anxieties you have given me in the past six tedious months—Can I say they were not anxious ones? But I pity you, sir, for the pleasure you have lost by so long an absence. Let me lead you to the nursery; or, let the dear prattlers come down to receive their father's blessing. How delightful is their dawning reason! Their improvements exceed my hopes: of what pleasure do you deprive yourself by these long absences!

My dear Miss Grandison, *let* me write on. I am upon a sweet subject. Why will you tear me from it? Who, Lucy, would not almost wish to be the wife, the half-slighted wife of a gay Sir Thomas, to be a Lady Grandison?

One reflection, my dear Miss Grandison, let me make, before I attend you, lest I should lose it: what man who

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now, at one view, takes in the whole gay, fluttering life of Sir Thomas Grandison, though young, gay, and fluttering himself, can propose to be more happy than Sir Thomas thought himself? What woman, who, in like manner, can take in the whole, useful, prudent, serene, benevolent life of Lady Grandison, whatever turn to pleasure, less solid, and more airy, she may have, sees not, from this imperfect sketch, all that they should wish to be; and the transitory vanity of the one, and the solid happiness that must attend the other, as well here as hereafter.

Dear lady!—had you not hurried me so, how much better should I have expressed myself!

I come. I come.

—o—

LETTER LVII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Miss Grandison has been making me read aloud some part of the letter I had just writ to you, Lucy. We know, said she, it is about *us;* but we shall think what you have written, greatly to our disadvantage, if we cannot hear some of it. Then she insisted (she is an arbitrary dear creature) on my giving the company [it was at tea, and Lord L—— present] such histories as she could call for of my own family. On this condition only, said she, will we consent to be made fully known, as I find we shall, if I do not steal away your pen and ink, to *our* grandmother Shirley, *our* aunt Selby, and even to *our* Lucy.

Do not you think, Lucy, I ran on with pleasure in describing the persons and tempers of my father and mother, and relating their fortunes, loves, difficulties; as my grandmamma and aunt had enabled me to do, from what they used to recount in many a long summer-day, and in many a winter-evening, as we girls sat at work—Happy memorials!—Ay, but do you believe she did not question me about later events? She did, indeed, call upon me for two other histories.

And of whom? methinks you ask.

I won't tell *you*, Lucy: but if my *aunt* should be solicitous to know, and should *guess* that my uncle's and hers (so enter-

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taining and instructive) was one of them; and if you, Lucy, should *guess* that the history of a young lady, whose discretion got the better of her love, and who cannot be dearer to herself than she is to me, is the other—Why, perhaps, neither my aunt, nor you, my dear, may be much mistaken.

Methinks I would fain rise now and then to my former *serene-pertness:* [allow you of the words so connected?] but my heart is heavy.

They were delighted with a certain gentleman's humorous character and courtship; with his lady's prudence and goodness, in the one story: and in the other, with the young lady's victorious discretion. They wish to be personally acquainted with each, and with my grandmamma. *All* the worthies in the world, my dear, are not in the Grandison family!

Before I resume the continuation of the ladies' family-history, let me ask; don't you think, my dear, that God has blessed these happy children, for the sake of their excellent mother? And who knows, but for their duty to their less deserving father? It is my notion, that one person's remissness in duty, where there is a reciprocal one, does not absolve the other party from the performance of his. It is difficult, indeed, to love so well a faulty or remiss parent, as a kind and good one. But our duty is indispensable; and where it is paid, a blessing may the rather be expected, as the parent has not done his. If, *when you do well and suffer for it,* says the apostle, *ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.*—Not to mention one consideration, which, however, ought not to be left out of the account; that a good child will be no less benefited by the *warning,* as Sir Charles no doubt is, from his father's unhappy turn; than by the *example,* as he is from that of his excellent mother.

Lady L—— referred to the paper given in by the short-hand writer, for the occasion (as mentioned by Sir Charles) to which these three worthy children owed the loss of such a mother.* And this drew her into a melancholy relation of some very affecting particulars. Among other things, she said, her mother regretted, in her last hours, that she had no

* Letter XLIX. p. 313.

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opportunity, that she could think just and honourable, to lay by anything considerable for her daughters. Her jewels, and some valuable trinkets, she hoped, would be theirs: but that would be at their father's pleasure. I wish, said she, that my dear girls were to have between them the tenth part of what I have saved—But I have done but my duty.

I have told you, Charlotte, said the countess, what my mother said to me a few hours before she died; and I will repeat it to Miss Byron. After having, upon general principles, recommended filial duty, and brotherly and sisterly love to us all; and after my brother and sister had withdrawn, My dear Caroline, said she, let me add to the general arguments of the duty I have been enforcing upon you all, one respecting your *interest*, and let your sister know it. I am afraid there will be but a slender provision made for my dear girls. Your papa has the notion riveted in him, which is common to men of ancient families, that daughters are but encumbrances, and that the son is to be everything. He loves his girls: he loves you dearly: but he has often declared, that, were he to have entire all the fortune that descended to him from his father, he would not give to his daughters, marry whom they would, more than 5000*l.* apiece. Your brother loves you: he loves me. It will be in *his* power, should he survive your father, to be a friend to you.—Love your brother.

To my brother afterwards she said something: I believe, recommending his sisters to him; for we coming in, boy as he was in years, but man in behaviour and understanding, he took each of our hands—You remember it, Charlotte [both sisters wept]; and kneeling down, and putting them in my mother's held-out dying hands, and bowing his face upon all three—All, madam—All, my dearest, best of mammas, that you have enjoined——

He could say no more; and our arms were wet with his tears.—Enough, enough, my son; I distress you!—And she kissed her own arm—These are precious tears—You embalm me, my son, with your tears—Oh how precious the balm!—And she lifted up her head to kiss his cheek, and to repeat her blessings to the darling of her heart.

Who could refrain tears, my Lucy, on the representation

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of such a scene?—Miss Jervois and I wept, as if we had been present on the solemn occasion.

But, my Charlotte, give Miss Byron some brief account of the parting scene between my father and mother. She is affected as a sister should be—Tears, when time has matured a pungent grief into a sweet melancholy, are not hurtful: they are as the dew of the morning to the green herbage.

I cannot, said Miss Grandison—Do *you*, Lady L——.

Lady L—— proceeded—My father had long kept his chamber, from the unhappy adventure, which cost him and us all so dear. My mother, till she was forced to take to her bed, was constantly his attendant: and *then* was grieved she could not attend him still.

At last, the moment, happy to her, long dreaded by us, the releasing moment, approached. One last long farewell she wished to take of the man, who had been *ever* dear to her; and who had cost her *so* dear. He was told of her desire to be lifted to his bed-side in her bed; for one of his wounds (too soon skinned over) was broken out, and he was confined to his bed. He ordered himself to be carried in a great chair to hers. But then followed *such* a scene——

All we three children were in the room, kneeling by the bed-side—praying—weeping—oh how ineffectually!—Not even hope remaining—Best beloved of my soul! in faltering accents, said my mother, her head raised by pillows, so as that she sat upright—forgive the desire of my heart once more to see you!—They would not bring me to *you!*—Oh how I distress you! For my father sobbed; every feature of his face seemed swelled almost to bursting, and working as if in mortal agonies.—Charlotte, relieve me!——

The sweet lady's eyes were drowned in tears——

I cannot, said Miss Grandison; her handkerchief spread over her face.

Miss Emily sobbed. She held her hand before her eyes: her tears trickled through her fingers.

I was affected beyond measure—Yet besought her to proceed.—She went on.

I have endeavoured, said my mother, in broken sentences—It was my wish—It was my pride: indeed, my chiefest pride,—to be a good wife!——

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Oh, my dear!—You *have* been—My father could not say what.

Forgive my imperfections, sir!——

Oh, my dearest life!—you had no imperfections: I, I, was all imper—he could not speak out the word for his tears.

Bless your children in my sight: God hitherto has blessed them! God will continue to bless them, if they continue to deserve their father's blessing. Dear Sir Thomas, as you love them, bless them in my sight. I doubt not your goodness to them—But the blessing of a dying mother, joined with that of a surviving father—must have efficacy!

My father looked earnestly to us all—he could not speak.

My brother, following my mother's dying eye, which was cast upon my father, arose from his knees, and approaching my father's chair, cast himself at his feet. My father threw his arms about his neck—God bless—God bless my son, said he—and make him a better man than his father. My mother, demanding the cheek of her beloved son, said, God bless my dearest child, and make you an honour to your father's family, and your mother's memory!

We girls followed my brother's example.

God bless my daughters!—God bless you, sweet loves, said my father; first kissing one, then the other, as we kneeled.—God make you as good women as your mother: then, then, will you deserve to be happy.

God bless you, my dear girls, God bless you both, said my mother, kissing each, as you are dutiful to your father, and as you love one another—I hope I have given you no bad example.

My father began to accuse himself. My brother, with the piety of the patriarch's two best sons, retired, that he might not hear his father's confessions. We followed him to the farther end of the room. The manly youth sat down between us, and held a hand of each between his: his noble heart was penetrated: he two or three times lifted the hand of each to his lips. But he could only once speak, his heart seeming ready to burst; and that was as I remember, oh my sisters!—Comfort yourselves!—But who can say comfort?—These tears are equally our duty and our relief.

My mother retained to the last that generosity of mind

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which had ever distinguished her. She would not permit my father to proceed with his self-accusation: let us look forward, my dearest, my only love, said she. I have a blessed hope before me: I pity, as well as pray for, survivors: you are a man of sense, sir, and of enlarged sentiments: God direct you according to them, and comfort you! All my fear was (and that more particularly for some of the last past months), that *I* should have been the mournful survivor. In a very few moments all my sufferings will be over; and God give you, when you come to this unavoidable period of all human vanity, the same happy prospects that are now opening to me! Oh, sir, believe me all worldly joys are now nothing; *less* than nothing: even my love of you, and of the dear pledges of our mutual love, withholds not *now* my wishes after a happier state. There may we meet, and never be separated!—Forgive me only, my beloved husband, if I have ever made you for one hour unhappy or uneasy—Forgive the petulances of my *love!*

Who can bear this goodness? said my father: I have not deserved——

Dear sir, no more—Were you not the husband of my choice?—And now your grief affects me—Leave *me*, sir. You bring me back again to earth—God preserve you, watch over you, *heal* you, support you. Your hand, Sir Thomas Grandison, the name that ever was so pleasant in my ears! Your hand, sir! Your heart was my treasure: I have now, and only now, a better treasure, a diviner love in view. Adieu, and in this world for ever adieu, my husband, my friend, my Grandison!

She turned her head from him, sunk upon her pillows, and fainted; and so saw not, had not the *grief* to see, the stronger heart of my father overcome; for he fainted away, and was carried out in his chair by the servants who brought him in. He was in a strong convulsion fit, between his not half-cured wounds and his grief; and recovered not till all was over with my blessed mother.

After my father was carried out, she came to herself. Her chaplain was once more admitted. The fatal moment approached. She was asked, if she would see her children again? No, she said: but bid her last blessing be repeated

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to them, and her charge, of *loving one another*, in the words of our Saviour, as *she had loved us*: and when the chaplain came to read a text which she had imperfectly pointed to, but so as to be understood, she repeated, in faltering accents, but with more strength of voice than she had had for an hour before, 'I have fought a good fight; I have finished 'my course; I have kept the faith—There is laid up for me 'a crown of righteousness:' And then her voice failing, she gave signs of satisfaction, in the hope of being entitled to that crown: and expired in an ejaculation that her ebbing life could not support.

Oh, my Lucy! may my latter end, and the latter end of all I love, be like hers! The two ladies were in speechless tears, so was Miss Jervois, so was I, for some minutes. And for an hour or two all the joys of life were as nothing to me. Even the regard I had entertained for the excellent son of a lady *so* excellent, my protector, my deliverer, had, for some hours, subsided, and was as nothing to me. Even now that I have concluded this moving recapitulation, it seems as nothing; and the whole world, my dear, is as a bit of dirt under my feet.

—o—

LETTER LVIII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

THE son was inconsolable upon his mother's death. He loved his father, but next to adored his mother. His father, though he had given so little attention to his education, was excessively fond of him: and no doubt but he the more easily satisfied himself on this head, as he knew his remissness was so well supplied by his lady's care, which mingled with the cares of the masters of the several sciences, who came home to him, at her desire.

A deep melancholy having seized the young gentleman on a loss so irreparable, his father, who himself was greatly grieved, and the more, as he could not but reproach himself as having at least hastened that loss, was alarmed for his son; and yielded to the entreaties of General W——, brother of Lord W——, to permit him to travel. The general recommended for a governor to the young gentleman, an officer

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under him, who had been wounded, and obliged to quit the military service. Sir Thomas allowed his son 800*l.* a year, from the day of his setting out on his travels, which he augmented afterwards to 1000*l.* Sir Charles was about seventeen when his mother died.

The two daughters were taken by Lady W——. But she dying in about twelve months after Lady Grandison, they returned to their father; who, by that time, had pretty well got over his grief for the loss of his lady, and was quite recovered of the wounds which he received in the duel that cost her her life.

He placed over his daughters as governess (though they both took exceptions at that title, supposing themselves of age to manage for themselves), the widow of one of his gay friends, Oldham by name, whose fortune had not held out as Sir Thomas's had done. Men of strong health, I have heard my grandfather say, and of a riotous turn, should not, in mere *compassion*, keep company with men of feebler constitutions, and make them the companions of their riots. So may one say, I believe, that extravagant men, of great and small fortunes, are equally ill-suited; since the expenses which will but shake the one, will quite demolish the other.

Mrs. Oldham had fine qualities, and was an economist. She deserved a better husband than had fallen to her lot; and the young ladies, having had a foundation laid by a still more excellent manager, received no small advantage from her skill in family affairs. But it was related to me with reluctance, and as what I must know on a further acquaintance with her family, if they did not tell it to me, that Sir Thomas was grateful to this lady in a way that cost her her reputation. She was obliged, in short, in little more than a twelvemonth, to quit the country, and to come up to town. She had an indisposition, which kept her from going abroad for a month or two.

Lady L—— being then about nineteen, and Miss Grandison about sixteen, they had spirit enough to oppose the return of this lady to her charge. They undertook themselves to manage everything at the capital seat in Hampshire.

Sir Thomas had another seat in Essex. Thither, on the reluctance of the young ladies to receive again Mrs. Oldham,

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he carried her; and they, as well as everybody else, for some time, apprehended they were actually married. She was handsome; well-descended; and though she became so unhappily sensible of the favours and presents by which Sir Thomas made way to her heart, she had an untainted character when he took her as a governess to the young ladies.

Was not Sir Thomas very, very faulty, with regard to this poor woman?—She had already suffered enough from a bad husband, to whom she remarkably well performed her duty. —Poor woman!—The example to his own daughters was an abominable one. She was the relict of his friend: she was under his protection: thrown into it by her unhappy circumstances.—Were not these great aggravations to his crime?—Happy for those parents who live not to see such catastrophes as attended this child! This darling, it seems: not undeservedly so! and whom they thought they had not unhappily married to Mr. Oldham—And he, poor man! thought himself not unhappy in Sir Thomas Grandison's acquaintance; though it ended in his emulating him in his expenses, with a much less estate; in the ruin of his fortune, which indeed was his own fault; and in the ruin of his wife's virtue, which was more Sir Thomas's than hers.—May I say so?—If I may not (since women, whose glory is their chastity, must not yield to temptation), had not the husband, however, something to answer for, who, with his eyes open, lived at such a rate, against his wife's dutiful remonstrances, and better example, as reduced her (after his death) to the necessity of dependence on another's favour, and *such* another!

Sir Thomas was greatly displeased with his daughters, for resisting him in the return of their governess. He had thought the reason of her withdrawing a secret, because he wished it to be one: and yet her disgrace was, at the time, everywhere talked of, but in *his* presence.

This woman is still living. She has two children by Sir Thomas, who are also living, and one by Mr. Oldham. I shall be told more of her history when the ladies come to give me some account of their brother's.

Sir Thomas went on in the same gay fluttering way that he had done all his life. The love of *pleasure*, as it is called, was wrought into his habit. He was a *slave* to it, and to

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what he called *freedom.* He was deemed one of the best companions among men, and one of the gallantest men among women. His advantages of person and mind were snares to him. Mrs. Oldham was not the only one of her sex with whom he was intimate: he had another mistress in town, who had a taste for all its gaieties, and who even assumed his name.

He would now and then, by way of excursion, and to surprise the young ladies, visit Grandison Hall; but, though it was once the seat he most delighted in, neither gave, nor seemed to receive, much pleasure there; hurrying away on a sudden, as if he had escaped from it; though never father had more reason to be pleased with the conduct and duty of daughters: and this he often declared, boasting of them in their absence; but snubbing, chiding, and studying to find fault with them, when present.

But what equally surprised and affected them was, that his son had been a year abroad, when he prohibited them to write to, or correspond with, him; and, by their brother's discontinuing to write to them, from about the same time, they supposed that he was under the same prohibition: and so, it seems, he was.

They presumed their father's reason for this unkind prohibition was, his fear that his gaieties would have been one of the subjects of the correspondence; and the rather, as those gaieties were so likely to affect all three in their fortunes.

The young ladies, however, for some time, continued writing to their brother. Miss Grandison, in mentioning this, said, in her usual sprightly manner, that she never had any notion of obeying unreasonable commands; commands so evidently unreasonable as to be unnatural: and she called upon me to justify her in her notion. The countess also desired me to speak my mind on this subject.

I am apprehensive, said I, of children's *partiality* in this respect: if they make themselves their own judges in the performance or non-performance of a duty, *inclination,* I am afraid, will too often be their guide, rather than right reason. They will be too apt, perhaps, to call those commands unnatural, which are not *so* unnatural as this seems to be.

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But, Harriet, said Miss Grandison, would not you have written on, in the like circumstances?

I believe not, replied I; and partly for this reason; because I should have had no doubt but my brother would have the same prohibition; and I should only have shewn my brother, as well as my father (were my father to know it), an instance of my refractoriness, without obtaining the desired end; or, if my brother had written, I should have made him a partaker in my fault.

Your answer regards the policy of the thing, Harriet, said Miss Grandison: but ought an unnatural command——

There she stopt: yet by her looks expected me to speak.

I should have thought it hard; but that it was more meritorious to submit than the contrary. I believe I should have supposed, that my father might have reasons which might not appear to me. But, pray, ladies, how did your brother——

Oh, he was implicit——

Will you forgive me, ladies?—I should have been concerned, I think, that my brother, in a point of duty, though it were one that might be *disputable*, should be more *nice*, more *delicate*, than his sister.

Miss Emily looked as if she were pleased with me.

Well, you are a good girl, a *very* good girl, said Miss Grandison: *that*, whether your doctrine be just or not, is out of dispute.

This prohibition gave the sisters the more sensible concern, as they were afraid it would lay a foundation for distance and indifference in their brother to them; on whom, as their mother had presaged, they were likely, if he survived their father, to have a too great dependence; but more particularly at that time, as their brother had promised, at his taking leave of them, to write a regular account of all that befell him, and of all that was curious, and worthy of notice, in the courts and places he visited; and had actually begun to do so; and as he had asked their advice in relation to his governor, who proved not so proper a person for that employment, as was expected; and to which they had answered, without knowing, for some time, what was the resolution he took.

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They asked their father, from time to time, after the welfare of their brother. He would answer them with pleasure, and sometimes with tears in his eyes, he is all that is *dutiful, brave, pious, worthy:* and would sometimes add, *God reward him!* I *cannot.* But when he mentioned the word *dutiful,* he would look at them, as if he had in his thoughts their resisting him in his intention of reinstating their governess; the only time, they could recollect, that they had given him the shadow of displeasure.

The ladies went on, and said that Sir Thomas, in all companies, gloried in his son. And once Lord W——, who himself, on his lady's death, openly indulged himself in liberties which before he was only suspected to take [oh, my Lucy! how rare a character, in this age, is that of a virtuous man!], told some gentlemen, who wondered that Sir Thomas Grandison could permit a son so beloved to be absent from him so many years, that the reason Sir Thomas gave was, that his son's morals and his own were so different, that he should not be able to bear his own consciousness, if he consented to his return to England. The unhappy man was so habituated to vice, that he could talk familiarly of his gaieties to his intimates, seeming to think them too well known for him to endeavour to conceal them; but, however, would add sometimes, I intend to set about altering my course of life; and then will I send for my son. But, alas! Sir Thomas went on, from year to year, only *intending:* he lived not to begin the promised *alteration,* nor to see his son.

Yet one awakener he had, that made him talk of beginning the alteration of his way of living out of hand, and of sending for his son; which last act was to be the forerunner of his reformation.

It happened that Mrs. Farnborough, the woman he lived with when in town, was struck with the small-pox, in the height of her gaiety and pleasure; for she was taken ill at the opera, on seeing a lady of her acquaintance there, whose face bore too strongly the marks of the distemper, and who, it seems, had made her first visit to that place, rather than to a better. The malady, aided by her terror, proved mortal; and Sir Thomas was so much affected with the warning, that he left town, and, in pursuance of his temporary good

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resolutions, went down to his daughters; talked of sending for his son; and, for some few months, lived like the man of sense and understanding he was known to be.

—o—

LETTER LIX.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

LORD L—— returned from his travels about the time that Mrs. Farnborough was taken ill. He had brought some presents to Sir Thomas from his son, who took all opportunities to send him over curiosities, some of considerable value; which served at the same time to shew his economy and his duty. He forgot not, in his way, his sisters, though his accompanying letters were short, and merely polite, and such as required no other answer than thanks: only they could discover by them, that he had warm wishes to be allowed to return to England; but such a submission to his father's pleasure, as entirely to give up his own.

Sir Thomas seemed fond of Lord L——: and, setting out on Mrs. Farnborough's death for Grandison Hall, gave him an invitation to visit him there; for he would listen with pleasure an hour together to him, or to any one, who would talk, and give him some account of his son. How predominant must those passions, those habits be in his heart, which could take place of a love so laudably paternal!

In pursuance of this invitation, Lord L—— attended him at the Hall; and there fell in love with the eldest of the young ladies. He revealed his passion to her. She referred herself wholly to her father. Sir Thomas could not be blind to their mutual affection. Everybody saw it. Lord L——'s passion was of the ardent kind; and he was too honest to wish to conceal it. But yet Sir Thomas would not see it. He behaved, however, with great freedom and civility to my lord; so that the heart of the young lady was insensibly engaged; but Sir Thomas avoided several opportunities which the lover had lain in wait for, to open his mind, and make proposals.

At last, my lord desired an audience of Sir Thomas, as upon a subject of the last importance. The baronet, after some

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little delays, and not without some inauspicious reluctance, granted it: and then my lord revealed his passion to him.

Sir Thomas asked him, if he had made it known to his daughter? And yet must have seen on an hundred occasions, at breakfast, at dinner, at tea, at supper, how matters stood with both the lovers, if Miss Grandison's pleasant account of the matter may be depended upon.

Lord L—— owned he had; and that he had asked her leave to make proposals to her father, to whom she wholly referred herself.

Sir Thomas seemed uneasy; and oddly answered, he was sorry for it: he wished his lordship had not put such notions in the girl's head. Both his daughters would now be set a romancing, he supposed. They were, till now, modest young creatures, he said. Young women should not too soon be set to look out of themselves for happiness—he had known many quiet and orderly girls set a madding by the notice of men. He did not know what business young fellows had to find out qualifications in other men's daughters, that the parents of those daughters had not given themselves leisure to discover. A daughter of *his*, he hoped, had not encouraged such discoveries. It was to him but as *yesterday*, when they were crowing in the arms of their nurses; and now, he supposed, they would be set a crowing after wedlock.

What an *odd* father was Sir Thomas, my Lucy! His own life, it is evident, had passed away very pleasantly.

Indeed he could hardly bear to think, he added, of either of his daughters as marriageable yet. They have not been nursed in the town hot-beds, my lord. They are sober country girls, and good housewives. I love not that girls should marry before they have done growing. A young wife makes a vapourish mother. I forget their age—But twenty-six, or twenty-eight, is time enough for a woman, either for the sake of modesty or discretion, to marry.

We may like *gay* men for *husbands*, Lucy: some of us do: but, at this rate, those daughters must be very good girls, who can make their best courtesies to their mothers, and thank them for their *fancies*; or the fathers must be more attentive to their growth than Sir Thomas was to that of *his* daughters. —What have I said?—I am here afraid of my uncle.

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My lord was surprised, and well he might. Sir Thomas had orgot, as Lady L—— observed, that he himself thought *Miss W——* was not too young at seventeen to be *Lady Grandison.*

My lord was a modest man: he was begging (as it may be called) the young woman, whom of all the women in the world he loved best, of her father, who was a man that knew the world, and had long made a considerable figure in it; and who, for reasons which would have held with him had he lived to see her *forty*, had no mind to part with her. Yet my lord pleaded his passion, her great and good qualities, as acknowledged by himself; and modestly hinted at the unexceptionableness of his own character, and the favour he stood in with his son; not saying the least word of his birth and alliances, which some lovers of his rank would not have forgot: and, it seems, he was right in forbearing to make these accidents a plea; for Sir Thomas valued himself upon his ancestry; and used to say, that his progenitor, in James the First's time, disgraced it by accepting of the title of baronet.

Sir Thomas allowed something to the plea of his standing well with his son. Let me tell you, my lord, said he, that I shall take no step in a family affair of this consequence, without consulting with my son; and the rather, as he is far from expecting so much of my consideration for him. He is the pride of my life.

My lord desired that his suit might be put upon the issue of his son's approbation.

But, pray, my lord, what fortune do you expect with my girl? Well as you love her, I suppose the return of her love for yours, which you seem not to doubt, will not be enough. Can the poor girl be a countess without a confounded parcel of dross fastened to her petticoat, to make her weight in the other scale?

My circumstances, said my honest Lord L——, permit me not, in discretion, to make that compliment to my love, which my heart would with transport make, were they better: but I will lay them faithfully before you, and be determined by your generosity.

I could not but expect from a young man of your lordship's good sense, such an answer as this: and yet I must tell you, that we fathers, who know the world, expect to make some

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advantage of a knowledge that has cost us so much. I should not dislike a little more romancing in love, from a man that asks for my daughter, though I care not how little of it is shown by my son to another man's. Every father *thinks* thus, my lord; but is not so honest as to *own* it.

I am sure, Sir Thomas, that you would not think a man worthy of your daughter, who had no regard to anything but the gratification of his own wishes; who could think, for the sake of that, of involving a young lady in difficulties, which she never knew in her father's house.

Why, this, my lord, is well said. You and I may afford to make handsome compliments to one another, while compliments are only expected. I have a good share of health: I have not quitted the world so entirely, nor think I ought, as to look upon myself as the necessary tool of my children, to promote their happiness at the expense of my own. My lord, I have still a strong relish for the pleasures of this world. My daughters *may* be women grown: your lordship seems to have *found out* that they *are;* and has persuaded one of them, that she *is;* and the other will be ready to think she is not three years behind her. This is an inconvenience which you have brought upon me. And as I would be glad to live a little longer for myself, I wish you to withdraw your suit; and leave me to do as well as I *can* with my daughters. I propose to carry them to town next winter. They shall there look about them, and see whom they could like, and who could like them, that they may not be liable to after-repentance, for having taken the first man that offered.

My lord told Sir Thomas, that he hoped there could not be reason to imagine, that anything could possibly arise from his address that should be incompatible with the happiness of a father—and was going on in the same reasonable strain; but Sir Thomas interrupted him——

You must not, my lord, suppose I can be a stranger to whatever may be urged by a young man on this subject. You say you are in love: Caroline is a girl that anybody may love: but I have not a mind she should marry so soon. I know the inconvenience of early marriages. A man's children treading upon his heels, and *shouldering him* with their shoulders. In short, my lord, I have an aversion to be called

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a grandfather, before I am a *grey* father. [Sir Thomas was not put to it to try to overcome this aversion.] Girls will start up, and look up, and parents cannot help it: but what father, in the vigour of his days, would not *wish* to help it? I am not fond of their partnership in my substance. Why should I divide my fortune with novices, when, making the handsome allowances to them, that I do make, it is not too much for myself? My son should be their example. He is within a year as old as my eldest girl. On his future alliances I build, and hope to add by them to the consequence of all my family. [Ah, Lucy!] Girls are said to be sooner women than boys are men. Let us see that they are so by their discretion, as well as by stature.—Let them stay.

And here Sir Thomas abruptly broke off the conversation for that time; to the great distress of Lord L——, who had reason to regret, that he had a man of wit, rather than a man of reason, to contend with.

Sir Thomas went directly into his closet, and sent for his two daughters; and, though not ill-naturedly, rallied them both so much on their own *discoveries*, as he wickedly phrased it, and on admitting Lord L—— into the secret, that neither of them could hold up her head, for two or three days, *in* his presence: but, *out* of it, Miss Caroline Grandison found that she was in love; and the more for Lord L——'s generous attachment, and Sir Thomas's not so generous discouragement.

My Lord wrote over to young Mr. Grandison, to favour his address. Lady L—— permitted me to copy the following answer to his application:—

My Lord,—I have the honour of your lordship's letter of the 17th. Never brother loved his sisters better than I do mine. As the natural effects of that love, I receive with pleasure the notification of your great regard for my elder sister. As to myself, I cannot have one objection: But what am I in this case? She is wholly my father's. I also am his. The consideration he gives me in this instance confounds me: it binds me to him in double duty. It would look like taking advantage of it, were I so much as to offer my humble opinion, unless he were pleased to command it from me. If he does, assure yourself, my lord, that (my

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sister's inclination in your lordship's favour presupposed) my voice shall be warmly given, as you wish.—I am, my lord, with equal affection and esteem,

Your lordship's faithful and obedient servant.

Both sisters rejoiced at the persual of this affectionate letter; for they were afraid that the unnatural prohibition of correspondence between them and their brother had estranged his affections *for* them.

The particulars of one more conversation I will give you, between my lord and Sir Thomas, on this important subject; for you must believe that Lord L—— could not permit a matter of such consequence to his own happiness to go easily off; especially as neither of the two daughters was able to stand her father's continual raillery, which had banished from the cautious eyes, and apprehensive countenances of both ladies, all indications of love, though it reigned with the more absolute power in the heart of Miss Caroline, for that concealment.

In this conversation, my lord began with a little more spirit than he finished the former. The countess lent me my lord's minutes of it; which he took for her to see, and to judge of all that passed at the time.

On my lord's lively but respectful address to Sir Thomas on the occasion, the baronet went directly into the circumstances of my lord, and his expectations.

Lord L—— told him frankly that he paid interest for 15,000*l.* for sisters' fortunes; three of whom were living, and single: that he believed two of them would soon be advantageously married; and he should wish to pay them their portions on the day; and was contriving to do so, by decreasing the incumbrance that his father had left upon the finest part of his estate, to the amount of 5000*l.*; which, and his sisters' fortunes, were all that lay upon a clear estate of 5000*l.* a year. After he had thus opened himself, he referred the whole to Sir Thomas's consideration.

My advice, my lord, is this, said the baronet; that you should by no means think of marriage till you are clear of the world. You will have 10,000*l.* to pay directly: you will have the interest of 10,000*l.* more to pay: and you men of

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title, on your marriages, whether you like ostentation or not, must be ostentatious. Your equipages, your houses, your furniture—A certain increase of expense—By no means, my Lord L——, think of marriage, till you are quite clear of the world, unless you could meet with some rich widow or heiress, who could do the business at once.

Lord L—— could only, at first, urge his passion [he durst not his daughter's affection, and the happiness of both, which were at stake]. Sir Thomas opposed discretion to that plea. Poor *passion*, Lucy, would be ashamed to see the sun, if *discretion* were always to be attended to in treaties of this kind.

Afterwards he told Sir Thomas, that he would accept the lady upon his own terms. He besought his consent to their nuptials. He would wait his own time and pleasure. He would be content if he gave not Miss Caroline a single shilling.

Sir Thomas was fretful—and so, lover-like, you would involve the girl you profess to love in difficulties. I will ask her if she wants for anything with me, that a modest girl can wish for? But, to be serious, it is a *plaguy* thing for a man to be obliged, by the officious *love*, as it is called, of a pretender to his daughters, to open his affairs, and expose his circumstances to strangers. I wish, my lord, that you had let my girls alone. I wish you had not found them out in their country retirement. I should have carried them to town, as I told you, in a few months. Women so brought up, so qualified, and handsome girls, are such rarities in this age, and men worth having are so affrighted at the luxury and expensiveness of the modern women, that I doubted not but the characters of my girls would have made their fortunes with very little of my help. They have *family*, my lord, to value themselves upon, though but spinsters. And let me tell you, since I shall be thought a more unnatural man than I am, if I do not obey the present demand upon me to open my circumstances, I owe my son a great deal more than 30,000*l.*

I don't understand you, Sir Thomas.

Why, thus, my lord, I explain myself: My father left me what is called rich. I lessened the ready money, which he

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had got together for a purchase he lived not to complete, a great deal. That I looked upon as a deodand: so was not answerable for it: and, as I was not married, my son had no right in it. When I was married, and he was given me——

Forgive me, Sir Thomas: your son a *right*—and had not your other children——

No, my lord: they were girls—and as to them, had I increased my fortune by penuriousness, instead of living *like a man*, I was determined as to their fortunes——

But, as I was saying, when Lady Grandison died, I think (though every father does not; nor should I, were he not the best of sons, and did he *expect* it) the produce of her jointure, which is very considerable, should have been my son's. As to what I annually allowed him, *that* it was my duty to allow him, as my son, and for my own credit, had his mother not brought me a shilling—Then, my lord, I have been obliged to take up money upon my Irish estate; which, being a family estate, my son ought to have had come clear to him. You see, my lord, how I expose myself.

You have a generous way of thinking, Sir Thomas, as to your son: but a man of your spirit would despise me if I did not *say*, that——

I have not so generous a way of thinking for my daughters —I will save your lordship the trouble of speaking out, because it is more agreeable from myself than it would be for any other man to do it. But to this I answer, that the late Earl of L——, your lordship's father, had one son and three daughters—I have one son, and two. He was an earl—I am but a simple baronet. If 5000*l.* a-piece is enough for an earl's daughters, half the sum ought to do for a baronet's.

Your fortune, Sir Thomas—and in England, where estates——

And where living, my lord, will be five times more expensive to you than it need to be, if you can content yourself to live where your estate lies—As for me, I have lived nobly—But had I been as rich as my father left me, 5000*l.* should have done with a daughter, I assure you. You, my lord, have *your* notions: I have *mine*. Money and a girl you expect from me: I ask nothing of you. As matters stand, if my girls will *keep* (and I hope they will), I intend

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to make as good a bargain for them, and with them, as I can. Not near 5000*l.* a-piece must they expect from me. I will not rob my son more than I *have* done.—See, here is a letter from him. It is an answer to one I had written, on the refusal of a wretch to lend me, upon my Irish estate, a sum that I wanted to answer a debt of honour, which I had contracted at Newmarket, unless my son (though it is an estate *in fee*) would join in the security. Does not such a son as this deserve everything?

I obtained a sight of this letter; and here is a copy:

HONOURED SIR,—I could almost say I am sorry that so superior a spirit as yours should vouchsafe to comply with Mr. O——'s disagreeable and *unnecessary* demand. But, at least, let me ask, Why, sir, did you condescend to write to me on the occasion, as if for my consent? Why did you not send me the deeds, ready to sign? Let me beg of you, ever dear and ever honoured sir, that you will not suffer any difficulties, that I can join to remove, to oppress your heart with doubts for one moment. Are you not my *father?*—And did you not give me a mother, whose memory is my glory? That *I am*, under God, is owing to you. That I am *what I am*, to your indulgence. Leave me not anything! You have given me an education, and I derive from you a spirit, that, by God's blessing on my duty to you, will enable me to make my own fortune: and, in that case, the foundation of it will be yours; and you will be entitled, for that foundation, to my warmest gratitude. Permit me, sir, to add, that, be my income ever so small, I am resolved to live within it. And let me beseech you to remit me but one half of your present bounty. My reputation is established; and I will engage not to discredit my father. All I have ever aimed at, is, to be in condition rather to lay, than to receive, an obligation. *That* your goodness has always enabled me to do: and I am rich, through your munificence; richer, in your favour.

Have you any thoughts, sir, of commanding me to attend you at Paris, or at the Hague; according to the hopes you gave me in your last?—I will not, if you do me this honour, *press* for a return with you to my native country: but I long

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to throw myself at your feet; and, wherever the opportunity of that happiness shall be given me, to assure you personally of the inviolable duty of your CHARLES GRANDISON.

Must not such a letter as this, Lucy, have stung to the heart a man of Sir Thomas Grandison's pride? If not, what *was* his pride?—Sir Thomas had as good an education as his son; yet could not live within the compass of an income of upwards of 7000*l.* a year. His son called himself rich with 800*l.* or 1000*l.* a year; and though abroad, in foreign countries, desired but half that allowance, that he might contribute, by the other half, to lessen the difficulties in which his father had involved himself by his extravagance.

His father, Lady L—— says, *was* affected with it. He wept: he blessed his son; and resolved, for his sake, to be more cautious in his wagering than he had hitherto been. Policy, therefore, would have justified the young gentleman's cheerful compliance, had he *not* been guided by superior motives. Sir Charles would not, I think one may be sure, have sacrificed to the unreasonable desires even of a father, the fortune to which he had an unquestionable right: an excess of generosity, amiable indeed, but pitiable, as contrary to the justice that every man owes to himself, and to those who may hereafter depend upon him; and what I have often heard my grandmamma lament in the instance of the worthy Mr. M——, whose family has suffered from an acquiescence with a father's extravagance, for which *that* father was only the more wretched.

Sir Charles's is the true, the reasonable virtue, that keeps clear of every extreme.—Oh, my dear! the Christian religion is a blessed religion! how does honest policy, as well as true greatness of mind, recommend that noble doctrine of returning good for evil!

—o—

LETTER LX.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

MY lord *repeated* his request, that he might have Sir Thomas's consent to his nuptials, upon his own terms; and

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promised never to expect a single shilling in dowry, but to leave the whole of that to time, and to his own convenience and pleasure.

We know, said Sir Thomas, what all this means. You talk, my lord, like a young man. You ought not to think (you once said it yourself) of involving a young woman you love, as well as yourself, in difficulties. I know the world, and what is best to be done, if you will think no more of my daughter. I hope she has discretion. *First love* is generally *first folly*. It is seldom *fit* to be encouraged. Your quality, my lord, to say nothing of your merit, will procure you a rich wife from the city. And the city now is as genteel, as polite, as the court was formerly. The wives and daughters of citizens, poor fellows! are apes of us gentry; and succeed pretty well, as to outward appearance, in the mimicry. You will, by this means, shake off all your father's sins. I speak in the language of young fellows, who expect a father to live solely for them, and not for himself. Some sober young men of quality and fortune, affrighted at the gaiety and extravagance of the modern women, will find out my girls; who, I hope, will have patience. If they have not, let them pursue their inclinations: let them take their *fill of love*, as Solomon says; and if they run their heads into a hedge, let them stick there by the horns, with all my heart.

See, my dear, what a man a rakish father is!—Oh, my good Lady Grandison, how might your choice have punished your children!

I pray to God, Sir Thomas, said my lord, bowing, but angry: I pray to God, to continue me in a different way of thinking from yours, if this *be* yours. Give me leave to say you are too young a gentleman to be a father of grown-up children. But I must love Miss Grandison; and still, if possible, poor young lady! more than ever, for what has passed in this conversation. And saying this, he withdrew.

Sir Thomas was very angry at this spirited speech. He sent for his daughter, and forbade her to receive my lord's addresses. He ordered her never to think of him: and directing Miss Charlotte to be called in, repeated his commands before her; and threatened to turn them both out of

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his house, if they presumed to encourage any address but with his knowledge. And don't think, said he, of going on to *engage your affections*, as a sensual forwardness is called, and then hope to take advantage of *my* weakness, to countenance *your own*. I know the world: I know your sex.—Your sister, I see, Charlotte, is a whining fool: see how she whimpers!—Be gone from my presence, Caroline! And remember, Charlotte (for I suppose this impertinent lord's address to your sister will go near to set you agog), that I expect, whether absent or present, to know of any application that may be made to you, before your liking has taken root in *love*, as it is called, and while my advice may have the weight that the permission or dissent of a father ought to have.

They both wept, courtesied, and withdrew.

At dinner Miss Caroline begged to be excused attending her gay and arbitrary father; being excessively grieved, and unfit, as she desired her sister to say, to be seen. But he commanded her attendance.

Miss Charlotte Grandison told me what this wicked man [shall I call Sir Charles Grandison's father so?] said on the occasion: 'Women's tears are but, as the poet says, the sweat 'of eyes. Caroline's eyes will not misbecome them. The 'more she is ashamed of herself, the less reason will she give 'me to be ashamed of her. Let me see how the fool looks, 'now she is conscious of her folly. Her bashful behaviour 'will be a half confession; and this is the first step to 'amendment. Tell her, that a woman's grief for not 'having been able to carry her point, has always been a 'pleasure to me. I will not be robbed of my pleasure. She 'owes it me for the pain she has given me.'

Lord L—— and she had parted. He had, on his knees, implored her hand. He would not, he said, either ask or expect a shilling of her father: his estate would and should work itself clear, without injury to his sisters, or postponing their marriage. Her prudence and generosity he built upon: they would enable him to be just to every one, and to preserve his own credit. He would not, he generously said, for the beloved daughter's sake, utter one reflecting word upon her father, after he had laid naked facts before

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her. Those, however, would too well justify him, if he did. And he again urged for her hand, and for a private marriage. Can I bear to think with patience, my dearest Miss Grandison, added he, that you and your sister, according to Sir Thomas's scheme, shall be carried to town, with minds nobler than the minds of any women in it, as adventurers, as *female* fortune-hunters, to take the chance of attracting the eyes and hearts of men, whether worthy or unworthy, purely to save your father's pocket? No, madam: believe me, I love you not for my own sake merely, though Heaven knows you are dearer to me than my life, but for yours as well: and my whole future conduct shall convince you that I do. My love, madam, has *friendship* for its base; and your worthy brother, once, in an argument, convinced me, that *love* might be selfish; that *friendship* could not; and that in a pure flame they could not be disunited; and when they were, that love was a cover only to a baseness of heart, which taught the pretender to it to seek to gratify his own passion, at the expense of the happiness or duty of the object pretended to be beloved.

See, my Lucy!—Did we girls ever think of this nice, but just, distinction before? And is not *friendship* a nobler band than *love?*—But is not Lord L—— a good man? Don't you love him, Lucy?—Why have I not met with these notions before in the men I have known?

But Miss Caroline was not less generous than my Lord L——. No scheme of my father's shall make me forget, said she, the merits of Lord L——. Your lordship's affairs will be made easier by time. I will not embarrass you. Think not yourself under any obligation to me. Whenever any opportunity offers to make you easy all at once (for a mind so generous ought not to be laid under difficulties), embrace it: only let me look upon you as my *friend*, till envy to a happier woman, or other unworthiness in Caroline Grandison, make me forfeit your good opinion.

Generous creature! said my lord. Never will I think of any other wife while you are single. Yet will I not fetter *her*, who would leave *me* free.—May I, madam, hope, if you will not bless me with your hand now, that my letters will be received?—Your father, in forbidding my address to

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you, has forbidden me his house. He is, and ought to be, master in it.—May I hope, madam, a correspondence——

I am unhappy, said she, that, having such a brother as sister never had, I cannot consult him. The dear Charlotte is too partial to me, and too apt to think of what may be her own case. But, my lord, I depend upon your honour, which you have never given me reason to doubt, that you will not put me upon doing a wrong thing, either with regard to my duty to my father, or to my own character. Try me not with a view to see the power you have over me. That would be ungenerous. I own you have some, indeed a great deal.

—o—

LETTER LXI.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Tuesday Night.

You may guess what were my lord's assurances on this generous confidence in him. They agreed upon a private correspondence by letters. Ah! Lady L——, was this *quite* right, though it came out happily in the event? Does not concealment always imply somewhat wrong? Ought you not to have done *your* duty, whether your father did *his* or not? Were you not *called upon* as I may say to a *trial of yours?* and is not virtue to be proved by trial? Remember you not who says, 'For what glory is it, if, when ye 'be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? 'But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, 'this is acceptable with God.'—But you, Lady L——, lost your excellent mother very early.

The worthy young lady would not, however, be prevailed upon to consent to a private marriage; and my lord took leave of her. Their parting was extremely tender; and the amiable Caroline, in the softness of heart, overcome by my lord's protestations of everlasting love to her in preference to all the women on earth, voluntarily assured him, that she never would receive any other proposal, while he was living and single.

Sir Thomas shewed himself so much displeased with Lord L——, for the freedom of his last speech, that my lord chose

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not to desire another audience of him; and yet, being unwilling to widen the difference, he took polite leave of the angry baronet in a letter, which was put into his hands just before he had commanded Miss Caroline to attend him at dinner, which she had begged to be excused doing.

Don't you pity the young lady, Lucy, in this situation, Lord L—— having but a little before taken leave of her, and set out for London?

Miss Charlotte told her sister, that, were it she, she should hardly have suffered Lord L—— to go away by *himself*—were it but to avoid an interview with a father who seemed to have been too much used to women's tears to be moved by them; and who had such a satirical vein, and such odd notions of love.

I was very earnest to know what passed at this dinner-time.

Miss Grandison said, It is best for *me* to answer Miss Byron's curiosity, I believe; as I was a stander-by, and only my father and sister were the players.

Players! repeated Lady L——. It was a cruel scene. And I believe, Miss Byron, it will make you not wonder, that I liked Lord L—— much the better for being rather a man of understanding than a man of wit.

Miss Grandison began as follows:

I went up with my father's *peremptory*, as I may call it, to my sister.

Oh, my dear mamma! said Caroline, when she found she must go down, on what a new occasion do I want your sweet mediation! But, Charlotte, I can neither *walk* nor *stand*——

You must then lean upon me, my dear, and *creep:* love will creep, they say, where it cannot go.

Wicked girl! interrupted Lady L——. I remember that was what she said.

I said it to make you smile, if I could, and take courage: but you know I was in tears for you notwithstanding.

You thought of what might befall yourself, Charlotte.

So I did. We never, I believe, *properly* feel for others, what does not touch ourselves.

A compassionate heart, said I, is a blessing, though a painful one: and yet there would be no supporting life, if we felt quite as poignantly for others as we do for ourselves. How happy was it for my Charlotte, that she could smile,

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when the father's apprehended lecture was intended for the use of both!

I thank you for this, Harriet. You will not be long my creditor—But I will proceed.

Caroline took my advice. She leaned upon me; and creep, creep, creep, down she *crept*. A fresh stream of tears fell from her eyes, when she came to the dining-room door: her tremblings were increased: and down she dropt upon a window-seat in the passage: I can go no further, said she.

Instantly a voice, that we knew must be observed, alarmed our ears—Where are you, Caroline! Charlotte! Girls! where are you? The housekeeper was in hearing, and ran to us: Ladies! ladies! your papa calls!—And we, in spite of the weakness of the one, and the unwillingness of the other, recovered our feet; and after half a dozen creeping motions more, found ourselves within the door, and in our father's sight, my sister leaning upon my arm.

What devil's in the wind now! What tragedy-movements are here!—What measured steps!—In some cases, all women are natural actresses. But come, Caroline, the play is over, and you mistake your cue.

Good sir!—Her hands held up—I wept for her; and for my own remoter case, if you will, Miss Byron.

The prologue is yours, Caroline. Charlotte, I doubt not, is ready with her epilogue. But come, come, it is time to close this farce—Take your places, girls! and don't be fools. —A pretty caution, thought I, said Miss Charlotte, when you make us both such!

However, the servants entering with the dinner, we hemmed, handkerchiefed, twinkled, took up our knives and forks, laid them down, and took them up again when our father's eye was upon us; piddled, sipped; but were more busy with our elbows than with our teeth. As for poor sister Caroline, love stuck in her throat. She tried to swallow, as one in a quinsey; a wry face, and a strained neck, denoting her difficulty to get down but a lark's morsel—And what made her more awkward (I am sure it did me), was a pair of the sharpest eyes that ever were seen in a man's head, and the man a father (the poor things having no mother, no aunt, to support their spirits), cast first on the one, then on

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the other; and now and then an overclouded brow, adding to our awkwardness: yet still more apprehensive of dinner-time being over, and the withdrawing of the servants.

The servants loved their young ladies. They attended with very serious faces; and seemed glad when they were dismissed.

Then it was that Caroline arose from her seat, made her courtesy awkwardly enough; with the air of a boarding-school miss, her hands before her.

My father let her make her honours, and go to the door, I rising to attend her; but then called her back; I daresay on purpose to enjoy her awkwardness, and to punish her.

Who bid you go? Whither are you going, Caroline? Come back, Charlotte.—But it will be always thus: a father's company is despised, when a girl gets a lover into her head. Fine encouragement for a father, to countenance a passion that shall give himself but a second or third place, who once had a first, in his children's affections! But I shall have reason to think myself fortunate, perhaps, if my children do not look upon me as their enemy.—Come back when I bid you.

We crept back more awkwardly than we went from table.

Sit down—We crossed our hands, and stood like a couple of fools.

Sit down when I bid you. You are confoundedly humble. I want to talk with you.

Down sat the two simpletons, on the edge of their chairs; their faces and necks averted.

Miss Grandison then gave the following dialogue. She humorously, by her voice (an humble one for her sister, a less meek one for herself, an imperious one for Sir Thomas), marked the speakers. I will prefix their names.

Sir Tho. What sort of leave has Lord L—— taken of you, Caroline? He has sent *me* a letter. Has he sent *you* one? I hope he did not think a personal leave due to the daughter, and not to the father.

Char. He thought you were angry with him, sir, said I. [Poor Caroline's answer was not ready].

Sir Tho. And supposed that your sister was *not*. Very well! What leave did he take of you, girl? woman? What do you call yourself?

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Char. Sir, my Lord L——, I daresay, intended no disrespect to——

I might as well have been silent, Harriet.

Sir Tho. I like not your preface, girl, interrupted he—Tell me not what *you* dare say. I spoke to your sister.—Come, sit upright. None of your averted faces and wry necks. A little more innocence in your hearts, and you'll have less shame in your countenances. I see what a league there is between you. A promising prospect before me, with you *both!* But tell me, Caroline, do you love Lord L——? Have you given him hope that you will be his, when you can get the cross father to change his mind; or, what is still better, out of your way for ever? All fathers are plaguy ill-natured, when they do not think of their girls' fellows, as their foolish girls think of them! Answer me, Caroline!

Car. [Weeping, at his severe speech.] What can I say, sir, and not displease you?

Sir Tho. What!—Why, that you are all obedience to your father. Cannot you say *that?* Sure you can say *that.*

Car. I hope, sir——

Sir Tho. And I *hope* too. But it becomes you to be *certain.* Can't you answer for your own heart?

Car. I believe you think, sir, that Lord L—— is not an unworthy man.

Sir Tho. A man is not more worthy, for making my daughter forget herself, and behave like a fool to her father.

Car. I may behave like a fool, sir, but not undutifully. You frighten me, sir. I am unable to hold up my head before you, when you are angry with me.

Sir Tho. Tell me that you have broken with Lord L——, as I have commanded you. Tell me, that you will never see him more, if you can avoid it. Tell me, that you will not write to him——

Car. Pardon me, sir, for saying that Lord L——'s behaviour to me has been ever uniformly respectful: he reveres my papa too: how can I treat him with disrespect?——

Sir Tho. So! I shall have it all out, presently—Go on,

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girl—And do you, Charlotte, attend to the lesson set you by your elder sister.

Char. Indeed, sir, I can answer for the goodness of my sister's heart, and for her duty to you.

Sir Tho. Well said! Now, Caroline, do you speak up for Charlotte's heart: one good turn deserves another. But say what you will for each other, I will be my own judge of both your hearts; and facts shall be the test. Do you know, Caroline, whether Charlotte has any lover that is to keep you in countenance with yours?

Car. I dare say, sir, that my sister Charlotte will not disoblige you.

Sir Tho. I hope, Caroline, you can say as much for Charlotte's sister.

Car. I hope I can, sir.

Sir Tho. Then you know my will.

Car. I presume, sir, it is your pleasure that I should always remain single.

Sir Tho. Hey-day!—But why, pray, does your ladyship suppose so?—Speak out.

Car. Because I think, forgive me to say it, that my Lord L——'s character and his quality are such, that a more creditable proposal cannot be expected.—Pray, sir, forgive me. And she held up her hands, pray-pray-fashion, thus——

Well said, Caroline! thought I—Pull up a courage, my dear!—What a deuce——

Sir Tho. His quality!—Gewgaw!—What is a Scottish peerage!—And does your silly heart beat after a coronet? You want to be a countess, do you?—But let me tell you, that if you have a *true* value for Lord L——, you will not, encumbered as he is with sisters' fortunes, wish him to marry you.

Car. As to title, sir, that is of very little account with me, without the good character.—As to prudence; my Lord L—— cannot see anything in me to forfeit his prudence for.

Well answered, Caroline! thought I, again said Miss Grandison. In such a laudable choice, all should not be left upon the poor *Lov-yer!*

Sir Tho. So the difficulty lies not with *you*, I find. *You* have no objection to Lord L——, if he has none to you.

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You are an humbled and mortified girl, then. The woman must be indeed in love, who, once thinking well of herself, can give a preference against herself to her lover.

What business had Sir Thomas to say this, my Lucy?

Sir Tho. Let me know, Caroline, what hopes you have given to Lord L——. Or rather, perhaps, what hopes he has given *you?*—Why are you silent? Answer me, girl.

Car. I hope, sir, I shall not disgrace my father, in thinking well of Lord L——.

Sir Tho. Nor will he disgrace himself, proud as are the Scottish beggars of their ancestry, in thinking well of a daughter of mine.

Car. Lord L——, though not a beggar, sir, would think it an honour, sir——

Sir Tho. Well said! Go on: go on. Why stops the girl? —And so he *ought.* But if Lord L—— is not a beggar for my daughter, let not my daughter be a beggar for Lord L——. But Lord L—— would think it an honour, you say—To be what? Your husband, I suppose. Answer my question; how stand matters between you and Lord L——?

Car. I cannot, such is my unhappiness! say anything that will please my father.

Sir Tho. How the girl evades my question!—Don't let me repeat it.

Car. It is not disgraceful, I hope, to own, that I had rather be——

There she stopt, and half hid her face in her bosom. And I thought, said Miss Grandison, that she never looked prettier in her life.

Sir Tho. Rather be Lord L——'s wife than my daughter —Well, Charlotte, tell me, when are *you* to begin to estrange me from your affections? When are *you* to begin to think your father stands in the way of your happiness? When do *you* cast your purveying eyes upon a mere stranger, and prefer him to your father?—I have done my part, I suppose; I have nothing to do but to allot you the fortunes that your lovers, as they are called, will tell you are necessary to their affairs, and then to lie me down and die. Your fellows then, with you, will dance over my grave; and I

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shall be no more remembered than if I had never been—except by your brother.

I could not help speaking here, said Miss Grandison. Oh, sir! how you wound me!—Do all fathers—forgive me, sir——

I saw his brow begin to lour.

Sir Tho. I bear not impertinence. I bear not—There he stopt in wrath.—But why, Caroline, do you evade my question? You know it. Answer it.

Car. I should be unworthy of the affection of such a man as Lord L—— is, if I disowned my esteem for him. Indeed, sir, I have an esteem for Lord L—— above any man I ever saw. You, sir, did not *always* disesteem him—My brother——

Sir Tho. So! Now all is out!—You have the forwardness—what shall I call it?—But I did, and I do, esteem Lord L——. But as what?—Not as a son-in-law. He came to me as my son's friend. I invited him down in that character: he, at that time, knew nothing of you. But no sooner came a single man into a single woman's company, but you both wanted to make a match of it. You were dutiful: and he was prudent: prudent for himself. I think you talked of his prudence a while ago. He made his application to you, or you to him, I know not which—[Then how poor Caroline wept! And I, said Miss Charlotte, could hardly forbear saying *barbarous!*] And when he found himself sure of you, then was the fool of the father to be consulted: and for what? Only to know what he would do for two people, who had left him no option in the case. And this is the trick of you all: and the poor father is to be passive, or else to be accounted a tyrant.

Car. Sir, I admitted not Lord L——'s address, but conditionally, as you should approve of it. Lord L—— desired not my approbation upon other terms.

Sir Tho. What nonsense is this?—Have you left me any way to help myself?—Come, Caroline, let me try you. I intend to carry you up to town: a young man of quality has made overtures to me. I believe I shall approve of his proposals. I am sure you will, if you are not prepossessed. Tell me, are you, have you left yourself at liberty to give way to

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my recommendation?—Why don't you answer me?—You know, that you received Lord L——'s addresses *but conditionally, as I should approve of them.* And your spark desired not your approbation upon other terms. Come, what say you to this?—What! are you confounded?—Well you may, if you cannot answer me as I wish! If you can, why don't you?—You see I put you but to your own test.

Car. Sir, it is not for me to argue with my father. Surely, I have not *intended* to be undutiful. Surely, I have not disgraced my family, by admitting Lord L——'s conditional——

Sir Tho. Conditional!—Fool!—How conditional?—Is it not absolute, as to the exclusion of me, or of my option? But I have ever found, that the man who condescends to argue with a woman, especially on certain points, in which *nature,* and not *reason,* is concerned, must follow her through a thousand windings, and find himself farthest off when he imagines himself nearest; and at last must content himself, panting for breath, to sit down where he set out; while she gambols about, and is ready to lead him a new course.

Car. I hope——

Sir Tho. None of your hopes—I will have certainty. May I—Come, I'll bring you to a point, if I can, woman as you are—May I receive proposals for you from any other man? Answer me, yes or no. Don't deal with me, as girls do with *common* fathers—Don't be disobedient, and then depend upon my weakness to forgive you. I am no *common* father. I know the world. I know your sex. I have *found* more fools in it than I have *made.*—Indeed no man makes, or needs to make, you fools. You have folly deep-rooted within you. That weed is a native of the soil. A very little watering will make it sprout, and choke the noble flowers that education has planted. I never knew a woman in my life that was wise by the experience of other people. But answer me! Say—Can you receive a new proposal? or can you not?

Caroline answered only by her tears.

Sir Tho. Damnably *constant,* I suppose!—So you give up real virtue, give up duty to a *father,* for fidelity, for constancy, for a fictitious virtue, to a *lover!* Come hither to me, girl—Why don't you come to me when I bid you?——

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LETTER LXII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

MISS CAROLINE arose: four creeping steps, her handkerchief at her eyes, brought her within her father's reach. He snatched her hand, quickened her pace, and brought her close to his knees. Poor sister Caroline! thought I: Oh the *ty*—And I had like, at the time, to have added the syllable *rant* to myself.—He pulled the other hand from her eye. The handkerchief dropt: he might see that it was wet and heavy with her tears. Fain would she have turned her blubbered eye from him. He held both her hands, and burst out into a laugh——

And what cries the girl for? Why, Caroline, you *shall* have a husband, I tell you. I will hasten with you to the London market. Will you be offered at Ranelagh market first? the concert or breakfasting?—Or shall I shew you at the opera, or at the play? Ha, ha, hah!—Hold up your head, my amorous girl! You shall stick some of your mother's jewels in your hair, and in your bosom, to draw the eyes of fellows. You must strike at once, while your face is new; or you will be mingled with the herd of women, who prostitute their faces at every polite place. Sweet impatient soul—Look at me, Caroline. Then he laughed again.

Car. Indeed, sir, if you were not my father——

Well said, Caroline! thought I; and trod on her toe.

Sir Tho. Hey-day! But what then?

Car. I would say you are very cruel.

Sir Tho. And is that all you would say, poor soft thing! in such circumstances, to any *other* man? Well, but, all this time, you don't tell me (still holding her hands) whether any other man will not do as well as your Scotsman?

Car. I am not kindly used. Indeed, sir, you don't use me kindly. I hope I am *not* an *amorous* creature, as you call me. I am *not* in haste to be married. I am willing to wait your time, your pleasure: but, as I presume, that there can be no objection to Lord L——, I wish not to be carried to any *London market.*

Sir Tho. [Gravely]. If I am disposed to rally you,

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Caroline; if I am willing to pass off, in a pleasant manner, a forwardness that I did not expect in my daughter; and for which, in my heart, I have despised the daughters of other men, though I have not told the wenches so: I will not be answered pertly. I will not have you forget yourself.

Car. [Courtesying]. Good sir, permit me to withdraw. I will recollect myself, and be sorry——

Sir Tho. And is it necessary for you to withdraw, to recollect your *duty?*—But you shall answer my question—How stand you and Lord L——? Are you resolved to have him, and none other?—Will you wait for him, will he wait for you, till death has numbered me with my ancestors?

Car. Oh, sir! And she looked down after her dropt handkerchief. She wanted it; and would have withdrawn one of her hands to reach it; and when she could not, the big tears running down her cheeks [yet she looked pretty], down she dropt on her knees—Forgive me, sir—I dread your displeasure—But must say, that I am not an *amorous* girl: and, to convince you that I am not, I never will marry any man living, if it be not Lord L——.

I all this time was in agitations for my poor sister. I tired three chairs; and now looked at her; now from her; then at my fingers' ends, wishing them claws, and the man a *husband,* instead of a father. Indeed, Miss Byron, I could not but make Caroline's treatment my own; and, in fancy, not so very remote, as you imagined, Lady L——. Once I said to myself, if some Lord L—— tenders himself to me, and I like him, I will not stand all this. The first moonlight night, if he urge me heartily, and if I am sure the parson is ready, I will be under another protection, despicably as I have always thought of runaway daughters!—Should I have done right, Miss Byron?

The *example,* Miss Grandison! replied I—Such a mother as you were blessed with! The world that would have sat in judgment upon the flight of the daughter, would not have known the cruel treatment of the father. I believe, my dear, you are glad you had not the trial: and you see how Lady L—— is rewarded for her patient duty.

That's my good Harriet! said Lady L——. I love you for your answer. But, sister, you leave me in too much distress.

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You must release me from my knees, and send me up to my chamber, as fast as you can.

A little patience, Lady L——. But what say my minutes? —Miss Byron seems all attention. This is a new subject to her. She never had anybody to control her.

I think I could have borne anything from a father or mother, said I, had it pleased God to continue to me so dear a blessing.

Fine talking, Harriet! said Miss Grandison. But let me say, that a witty father is not a desirable character—By the way, ours was as cruel [shall I say it, Lady L——? You are upon your knees, you know] to two very worthy sisters of his own: one of them ran away from him to a relation in Yorkshire, where she lives still, and as worthy an old maid she is as any in the county: the other died before she could get her fortune paid, or she would have been married to a man she loved, and who loved her: but she left every shilling of her fortune to her maiden sister, and nothing to my father.

It is well my brother is not in hearing, said Lady L——. He would not have borne the hundredth part of what we have said. But sufferers will complain. Remember, however, Charlotte, that I am still upon my knees.

See, my Lucy! Rakish men make not either good husbands or good fathers; nor yet good brothers—But, no wonder! The narrow-hearted creatures centre all their delight in themselves.—Finely do women choose, who, taken in by their specious airs, vows, protestations, become the abject properties of such wretches! Yet a reformed rake, they say, makes the best husband—Against general experience this is said—But by whom? By the vulgar and the inconsiderate only, surely!

Miss Grandison proceeded.

Sir Tho. You will never marry any other man living!—And this is declared, in order to convince me that you are not amorous!—Quibbling nonsense!—Had you *not* been amorous, you had not put yourself into a situation that should give you courage to say this to me. Bold fool! begone!

She arose.

Yet you shall not go, holding both her hands. And *dare* you thus declare yourself?—What option, I again ask you,

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is left me?—And yet Lord L—— and you, as you pretended just now, were determined only on a *conditional* courtship, as I should, or should not, *approve* of it! Confound your sex! This ever was, and ever will be, the case. The blind god sets you out, where you mean the *best*, on a pacing beast; you amble, prance, parade, till your giddy heads turn round; and then you gallop over hedge and ditch; leap fences; and duty, decency, and discretion, are trodden under foot!

Poor Miss Caroline! said I, Lucy, to them both—I expected this cruel retort.

I foresaw it, replied Lady L——. And this kept me off so long from declaring my preference of Lord L—— to all the men in the world; as, in justice to his merit, my heart several times bid me do without scruple.

Begone from my presence, said Sir Thomas, proceeded Miss Grandison—Yet he still held her hands—That little witch! I have been watching *her* eyes, and every working muscle of her saucy face: [meaning poor me, said Miss Grandison]: she takes part with you in all your distresses—You are sorely distressed, are you not? Am I not a tyrant with you both? —You want to be gone, both of you: then shall I be the subject of your free discourses. All the resentment, that now you endeavour to confine, will then burst out: I shall be entitled to no more of your duty than is consistent with your narrow interest: Lord L—— will be consulted in preference to me, and have the whole confidence of my daughters against me. I am now, from this hour, to be looked upon as your enemy, and not your father. But I will renounce you both; and permit your brother, the joy of my life, and the hope of my better days, to come over: and he shall renounce you, as I do, or I will renounce him: and, in that case, I shall be a father without a child; yet three living by the best of women. How would she——

I broke out here, said Miss Grandison, with an emotion that I could not suppress. Oh, my dear mamma! how much do we miss *you?* Were you to have become an angel when we were *infants*, should we have missed you as we do *now?* —Oh, my dear mamma! This, this is the time that girls most want a mother!

I was about to fly for it. I trembled at the sternness of my

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father's looks, on this apostrophe to my mother. He arose. Caroline, don't stir, said he; I have something more to say to you. Come hither, Charlotte! and held out both his hands—You have burst out at last. I saw your assurance swelling to your throat——

I threw myself at his feet, and besought him to forgive me!

But taking both my hands in one of his, as I held them up folded—Curse me if I do! said he. I was willing you should be present, in hopes to make you take warning by your sister's folly and inconsistency. Lord L—— has been a thief in my house. He has stolen my elder daughter's affections from me: yet has drawn her in, as pretending that he desired not her favour, but as I approved of his addresses, I do *not* approve of them. I hope I may be allowed to be my own judge in this case. She however declares, she will have nobody else. And have I brought up my children till the years that they should be of use and comfort to me; and continued a widower myself for their sakes [so my father was pleased to say, said Miss Grandison]; and all for a man I approve not?—And do you, Charlotte, call your blessed mother from her peaceful tomb, to relieve you and your sister against a tyrant father?—What comfort have I in prospect before me, from such daughters?—But leave me: leave my house. Seek your fortunes where you will. Take your clothes: take all that belongs to you: but nothing that was your mother's. I will give you each a draft on my banker for 500*l*. When that is gone, according to what I shall hear of your behaviour, you shall, or shall not, have more.

Dear sir, said Caroline, flinging herself on her knees by me, forgive my sister!—Dear, good sir! whatever become of *me*, forgive your Charlotte!

You are fearless of *your* destiny, Caroline. You will throw yourself into the arms of Lord L——, I doubt not.—I will send for your brother. But you shall both leave this house. I will shut it up the moment you are gone. It shall never again be opened while I live. When my ashes are mingled with those of your mother, then may you keep open house in it, and trample under foot the ashes of both.

I sobbed out, Dear sir, forgive me! I meant not to reflect upon my father, when I wished for my mother. I wished

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for her for *your* sake, sir, as well as for *ours*. She would have mediated—She would have softened——

Sir Tho. My hard heart—I know what you mean, Charlotte!—And flung from us a few paces, walking about in wrath, leaving us kneeling at his vacant chair.

He then, ringing the bell, the door in his hand, ordered in the housekeeper. She entered. A very good woman she was. She trembled for her kneeling ladies.

Sir Tho. Beckford, do you assist these girls in getting up everything that belongs to them. Give me an inventory of what they take. Their father's authority is grievous to them. They want to shake it off. They find themselves women grown. They want husbands——

Indeed, indeed, Beckford, we don't, said Caroline; interrupted by my father.

Do you give me the lie, bold face?

Pray your honour—Good your honour—entreated honest Beckford: never were modester young ladies. They are noted all over the county for their modesty and goodness——

Woman, woman, argue not with me. Modesty never forgets duty. Caroline loves not her father. Lord L—— has stolen away her affections from me. Charlotte is of her party: and so are *you*, I find. But take my commands in silence—A week longer they stay not in this house——

Beckford, throwing herself on her knees, repeated—Good your honour——

We both arose and threw ourselves at his feet——

Forgive us! I beseech you, forgive us!—For my mamma's sake, forgive us!—said Caroline——

For my mamma's sake, for my brother's sake, dear sir, forgive your daughters! cried I, in as rueful an accent.

And we each of us took hold of his opened coat, both in tears; and Beckford keeping us company.

Unmoved he went on—I intend you a *pleasure*, girls. I know you want to be freed from my authority. You are women grown. The man who has daughters knows not discomfort with them, till busy fellows bid them look out of their father's house for that happiness, which they hardly ever find but in it.

We are yours, my papa, said I—We are nobody's else—

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Do not, do not expose your children to the censures of the world.—Hitherto our reputations are unsullied——

Dear sir, cried Caroline, throw us not upon the world, the wide world! Dear sir, continue us in your protection. We want not to be in any other.

You shall try the experiment, girls—I am not *fit* to be your counsellor. Lord L—— has distanced me with the one: the other calls upon her departed mother to appear, to shield her from the cruelty of an unnatural father. And Lord L—— has the insolence to tell me to my face, that I am too young a father to take upon me the management of women-grown daughters. And so I find it. Blubber not, Beckford; assist your young ladies for their departure. A week is the longest time they have to stay in this house. I want to shut it up: never more to enter its gates.

We continued our pleadings.

Oh, sir! said Caroline, turn not your children out of doors. We are *daughters*. We never more wanted a father's protection than now.

What have we done, sir, cried I, to deserve being turned out of your doors?—For every offensive word we beg your pardon. You shall always have dutiful children of us. Permit me to write to my brother——

So, so! You mend the matter. You want to interest your brother in your favour—You want to appeal to him, do you? and to make a son sit in judgment upon his father? —Prate not, girls! Entreat not!—Get ready to be gone. I will shut up this house——

Wherever *you* are, sir, entreated I, there let *us* be—Renounce not your children, your penitent children.

He proceeded. I suppose Lord L—— will as soon find out your person, Caroline, as he has your inclination; so contrary to my liking. As to you, Charlotte, you may go down to your old aunt *Prue*, in Yorkshire—[He calls their aunt Eleanor so from the word *prude*—Yet we have seen, Lucy, it was owing to *him* that this lady did not marry:]—she will be able to instruct you, that patience is a virtue; and that you ought not to be in haste to take a first offer, for fear you should not have a second.

Poor sister Caroline! He looked disdainfully at her.

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You are my father, sir, said she. All is welcome from you: but you shall have no cause to reproach me. I will not be in haste. And here on my knees I promise, that I will never be Lord L——'s, without your consent. I only beg of you, sir, not to propose to me any other man.

My father partly relented [partly, Harriet]: I take you at your word, girl, said he; and I insist that you shall not correspond with him, nor see him—You answer not to that. But you know my will. And once more, answer or not, I require your obedience. Beckford, you may go. Rise, Caroline.

And am *I* forgiven, sir? said I—Dear sir, forgive your Charlotte—[Yet, Miss Byron, what was my crime?]

Make the best use of the example before you, Charlotte: not to imitate Caroline, in engaging your affections unknown to me.—Remember *that*. She has *her* plagues in giving *me* plague. It is fit she should. Where you cannot in duty follow the example, take the warning.

Beckford was withdrawn. He graciously saluted each girl: and thus triumphantly made them express sorrow for—Do you know for what, Harriet?

I wish, thought I to myself, Lucy, that these boisterous spirits, either fathers or husbands, were not generally most observed.

But was Miss Grandison's spirits so easily subdued? thought I.

You smile, Harriet. What do you smile at?

Will you forgive me, if I tell you?

I don't know.

I depend on your goodnature—I smiled to think, Lady L——, how finely Miss Grandison has got up since that time.

Miss Gr. Oh, the sly girl!—Remember you not, that I was *before* your debtor?

A good hit, I protest! said Lady L——. Yet Charlotte was always a pert girl out of her father's presence. But I will add a word or two to my sister's narrative.

My father kept us with him till he read Lord L——'s letter, which he opened not till then, and plainly, as I saw, to find some new fault with him and me on the occasion; but I came off better than I apprehended I should at the time; for I had not seen it. Here is a copy of it.

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Lady L—— allowed me, Lucy, to take it up with me, when we parted for the night.

PERMIT me, sir, by pen and ink, rather than in person, as I think it will be most acceptable to you, to thank you, as I most cordially do, for the kind and generous treatment I have received at your hands, during a whole month's residence at Grandison Hall, whither I came with intent to stay but three days.

I am afraid I suffered myself to be surprised into an undue warmth of expression, when I last went from your presence. I ask your pardon, if so. You have a right in your own child. God forbid that I should ever attempt to invade it! But what a happy man should I be, if my love for Miss Grandison, and that right, could be made to coincide! I may have appeared to have acted wrong in your apprehension, in applying myself first to Miss Grandison: I beg, sir, your pardon for that also.

But, perhaps, I have a still greater fault to atone for. I need not indeed acquaint you with it; but I had rather entitle myself, by my ingenuousness, to your forgiveness, than to wish to conceal anything from you in an article of this high importance, whether you grant it me or not. I own then, that when I last departed from your angry presence, I directly went to Miss Grandison, and on my knees implored her hand. I presumed that an alliance with me was not a disgraceful one to her; and assured her, that my estate should work itself clear without any expectation from you; as it will, I hope, in a few years, by good management, to which I was sure she would contribute. But she refused me, and resolved to await the good pleasure of her father; yet giving me, I must honestly add, condescending hopes of her favour, could your consent be obtained.

Thus is the important affair circumstanced.

I will never marry any other woman, while there is the least shadow of hope that she can be mine. The conversation of the best of young men, your son, for two months, in Italy, and one before *that* in some of the German courts, has made me ambitious of following such an example in every duty of life: and if I might obtain, by your favour, so dear

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a wife, and so worthy a brother, the happiest man in the world would then be, sir, your obliged and faithful servant,

L——.

Yet my father, said Lady L——, called it an artful letter; and observed, that Lord L—— was very sure of me, or he had not offered to make a proposal to me that deserved not to be excused. You were aiming at prudence, girl, in your refusal, I see that, said my father. You had no reason to doubt but Lord L—— would hereafter like you the better for declining marriage in that clandestine manner, because the refusal would give him an opportunity to make things more convenient to himself. One half of a woman's virtue is pride, continued he [I hope not truly, said Lady L——]; the other half, policy. If they were sure the man would not think the worse of them for it, they would not wait for a second question. Had you an independent fortune, Caroline, what would you have done?—But go; you are a weak, and yet a cunning girl. Cunning is the wisdom of women. Women's weakness is man's strength. I am sorry that *my* daughters are not compounded of less brittle materials. I wonder that any man who knows the sex, marries.

Thus spoke the *rakish*, the *keeping* father, Lucy, endeavouring to justify his private vices by general reflections on the sex. And thus are wickedness and libertinism called a knowledge of the world, a knowledge of human nature. Swift, for often painting a dunghill, and for his abominable Yahoe story, was complimented with this knowledge; but I hope, that the character of human nature, the character of creatures made in the image of the Deity, is not to be taken from the overflowings of such dirty imaginations.

What company, my dear, must these men be supposed to have generally kept? How are we authorised to wish (only that good is often produced out of evil, as is instanced in two such daughters, and such a son), that a man of this cast had never had the honour to call a Lady Grandison by his name! And yet Sir Thomas's vices called forth, if they did not establish, her virtues. What shall we say?

> Whatever is, is in its causes just:
> —— But purblind man

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Sees but a part o' th' chain, the nearest link;
His eyes not carrying to that equal beam,
That poises all above. DRYDEN.

I thought, my Lucy, that the conversation I have attempted to give, would not, though long, appear tedious to you; being upon a *new* subject, the behaviour of a free-liver of a father to his grown-up daughters, when they came to have expectations upon him, which he was not disposed to answer; and the rather, as it might serve to strengthen us, who have had in our family none but good men (though we have neighbours of a different character, who have wanted to be acquainted with us), in our resolution to reject the suits of libertine men by a stronger motive even than *for our own sakes:* and I therefore was glad of the opportunity of procuring it for you, and for our Nancy, now her recovered health will allow her to look abroad more than she had of late been used to do. I am sure, my grandmamma, and my aunt Selby, will be pleased with it; because it will be a good supplement to the lessons they have constantly inculcated upon us, against that narrow-hearted race of men, who live only for the gratification of their own lawless appetites, and consider all the rest of the world as made for themselves, the worst and most noxious reptiles in it.

—o—

LETTER LXIII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

THUS far had the ladies proceeded in their interesting story, when the letters of my grandmamma and aunt were brought me by a man and horse from London. By my answer you will see how much I was affected by its contents. The ladies saw my uneasiness, and were curious to know the cause. I told them from whence the letters came, and what the subject was; and that my aunt was to give for me, next Saturday, an answer to Lady D—— in person.

I then retired to write. When I had despatched the messenger, the ladies wished to know the resolution I had come to. I told them I had confirmed my negative.

Miss Grandison, with archness, held up her hands and eyes,

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I was vexed she did. Then, Charlotte, said I, spitefully, *you* would not have declined accepting his proposal.

She looked earnestly at me, and shook her head. Ah, Harriet, said she, you are an unaccountable girl! You will tell the truth; but not the whole truth.

I blushed, as I felt; and believe looked silly.

Ah, Harriet! repeated she; looking as if she would look me through.

Dear Miss Grandison! said I.

There is some Northamptonshire gentleman, of whom we have not yet heard.

I was a little easier then. But *can* this lady mean anything particular? She cannot be so ungenerous, surely, as to play upon a poor girl, if she thought her *entangled.* All I am afraid of is, that my temper will be utterly ruined. I am not so happy in myself as I used to be. Don't you think, Lucy, that, taking one thing with another, I am in a situation that is very teasing?—But let me find a better subject.

The ladies, at my request, pursued their family history.

Lord L—— and Miss Caroline went on, hoping for a change in Sir Thomas's mind. He would, no doubt, they said, have been overcome by the young lady's duty, and my Lord L——'s generosity, had he not made it inconvenient to himself to part with money.

He went to town, and carried his daughters with him; and it is thought, would not have been sorry, had the lovers married without his consent; for, he prohibited anew, on their coming to town, my lord's visits; so that they were obliged to their sister, as she pleasantly had told Lady L——, for contriving to forward their interviews.

Meantime, my lord's affairs growing urgent, by reason of his two sisters marrying, he gave way to the offers of a common friend of his and Lord W——'s, to engage that nobleman, who approved of the match, to talk to Sir Thomas on the subject.

Lord W—— and the baronet met. My lord was earnest in the cause of the lovers. Sir Thomas was not pleased with his interfering with his family affairs. And indeed a more improper man could hardly have been applied to on the occa-

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sion: for Lord W——, who is immensely rich, was always despised by Sir Thomas for his avarice; and he as much disliked Sir Thomas for what he called his profusion.

High words passed between them. They parted in passion; and Sir Thomas resenting Lord L——'s appeal to Lord W——, the sisters were in a worse situation than before; for now, besides having incurred the indignation of their father, their uncle, who was always afraid that Sir Thomas's extravagance would reduce the children to the necessity of hoping for his assistance, made a pretence of their father's ill-treatment to disclaim all acts of kindness and relation to them.

What concerned the sisters still more, was, my lord's declared antipathy to their brother; and that for no other reason, but because his father (who, he was sure, he said, could neither love nor hate in a right place) doted on him.

In this sad situation were these lovers, when overtures were made to Sir Thomas for his younger daughter: but though Miss Charlotte gave him no pretence to accuse *her* of beginning a love-affair unknown to him; yet those overtures never came to her knowledge from him, though they did from others: and would you have wondered, Harriet, said she, with such treatment before my eyes as Caroline met with, if I had been provoked to take some rash step?

No provocation, replied I, from a father, can justify a rash step in a child. I am glad, and so, I daresay, are you, that your prudence was your safeguard, when you were deprived of that which so good a child might have expected from a father's indulgence, especially when a mother was not in being.

Miss Grandison coloured, and bit her lip. Why did she colour?

At last Sir Thomas took a resolution to look into and regulate his affairs, preparative to the leave he intended to give to his beloved son to come over. From *his* duty, discretion, and good management, he was sure, he said, he should be the happiest of men. But he was at a loss what to do with Mrs. Oldham and her two children. He doubted not but his son had heard of his guilty commerce with her: yet he cared not, that the young gentleman should find her living in a kind of wife-like state in one of the family-seats. And yet she had

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made too great a sacrifice to him, to be unhandsomely used; and he thought he ought to provide for his children by her.

While he was meditating this change of measures, that he might stand well with a son, whose character for virtue and prudence made his father half afraid of him, a proposal of marriage was made to him for his son by one of the first men in the kingdom, whose daughter, accompanying her brother and his wife, in a tour to France and Italy, saw and fell in love with the young gentleman at Florence: and her brother gave way to his sister's regard for him, for the sake of the character he bore among the people of prime consideration in Italy.

Sir Thomas had several meetings on this subject, both with the brother and the earl his father; and was so fond of bringing it to bear, that he had thoughts of reserving to himself an annuity, and making over the whole of his estate to his son, in favour of this match: and once he said, he should by this means do as Victor Amadeus of Savoy did, rid himself of many incumbrances; and being not a *king*, was sure of his son's duty to him.

The ladies found a letter of their brother's among Sir Thomas's loose papers, which shewed that this offer had been actually made to him. This is a copy of it:

DEAR AND EVER-HONOURED SIR,—I am astonished at the contents of your last favour. If the proposal made in it arose from the natural greatness of your mind, and an indulgence which I have so often experienced, what shall I say to it?—I cannot bear it. If it proceed from proposals made to you, God forbid that I should give your name to a woman, how illustrious soever in her descent, and how high soever the circumstances of her family, whose friends could propose such conditions to my father.

I receive with inexpressible joy so near a hope of the long-wished-for leave to throw myself at your feet in my native country. When I have this happiness granted me, I will unbosom my whole heart to my father. The credit of your name, and the knowledge every one has of your goodness to me, will be my recommendation whenever you shall wish me to enlarge the family connexions.

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Till I have this honour, I beseech you, sir, to discontinue the treaty already begun.

You are pleased to ask my opinion of the lady, and whether I have any objection to her person. I remember, I thought her a very agreeable woman.

You mention, sir, the high sense the lady, as well as Lord and Lady N——, have of the civilities they received from me. My long residence abroad gives me the power of doing little offices for those of my country, who visit France and Italy. The little services I did to my lord, and the ladies with him, are too gratefully remembered by them.

I am extremely concerned that you have reason to be displeased with any part of the conduct of my sisters. Can the daughters of such a mother as you had the happiness to give them, forget themselves? Their want of consideration shall receive no countenance from me. I shall let them know, that my love, my esteem, if it be of consequence with them, is not founded on relation, but merit: and that, where duty to a parent is wanting, all other good qualities are to be suspected.

You ask my opinion of Lord L——, and whether he has sought to engage me to favour his addresses to your Caroline. He wrote to me on that subject: I enclose his letter, and a copy of my answer. As to my opinion of him, I must say, that I have not met with any British man abroad, of whose discretion, sobriety, and good-nature, I think more highly than I do of Lord L——'s. Justice requires of me this testimony. But as to the affair between him and my sister, I shall be extremely sorry, if Lord L——'s *first* impropriety of behaviour were to you; and if my sister has suffered her heart to be engaged against her duty.

You have the goodness to say, that my return will be a strengthening of your hands. May my own be weakened; may I ever want the power to do good to myself, or to those I love, when I forget, or depart from, the duty owing to the most indulgent of fathers, by his

CHARLES GRANDISON!

What an excellent young man is this!—But observe, Lucy, he says he will, on his return to England, unbosom his whole heart to his father; and, till then, he desires him

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to discontinue the begun treaty with Lord N——. Ah, my dear!—What has any *new* acquaintance to expect, were she to be entangled in a *hopeless passion?* But let us consider —Had Sir Charles been actually married, would his being so have enabled a woman's *reason* to triumph over her passion?—If so, passion is surely conquerable: and did I know anybody that would allow it to be so in the *one* case, and not in the *other,* I would bid her take shame to herself, and, with deep humiliation, mourn her ungovernable folly.

The above letter came not to the hands of the young ladies till after their father's death, which happened within a month of his receiving it, and before he had actually given permission for the young gentleman's return. You may suppose they were excessively affected with the bad impressions their father had sought to make in their brother's heart, of their conduct; and, when he died, were the more apprehensive of their force.

He had suspended the treaty of marriage for his son till the young gentleman should arrive. He had perplexed himself about his private affairs, which, by long neglect, became very intricate, and of consequence must be very irksome for such a man to look into. He was resolved therefore to leave it to each steward (having persuaded himself, against appearances, to have a good opinion of both) to examine the accounts of the other; not only as this would give the least trouble to himself, but as they had several items to charge, which he had no mind should be explained to his son. Nor were those gentlemen less solicitous to obtain discharges from him; for being apprised of his reason for looking into his affairs, they were afraid of the inspection of so good a manager as their young master was known to be.

Mr. Filmer, the steward for the Irish estate, came over, on this occasion, with his accounts: the two stewards acted in concert; and on the report of each, Sir Thomas examined totals only, and ordered releases to be drawn for his signing.

What a degrader, even of *high* spirits, is vice! What meanness was there in Sir Thomas's pride! To be afraid of the eye of a son, of whose duty he was always boasting!

But who shall answer for the reformation of an habitual libertine when a temptation offers? Observe what followed:

Mr. Filmer, knowing Sir Thomas's frailty, had brought

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over with him, and with a view to ensnare the unhappy man, a fine young creature, not more than sixteen, on pretence of visiting her aunt, who lived in Pall Mall, and who was a relation of his wife. She was innocent of actual crime: but her parents had no virtue, and had not made it a part of the young woman's education; but, on the contrary, had brought her up with a notion that her beauty would make her fortune; and she knew it was all the fortune they had to give her.

Mr Filmer, in his attendance on Sir Thomas, was always praising the beauty of Miss Obrien; her genteel descent, as well as her figure; her innocence [innocence! the attractive equally to the attempts of rakes and devils!] But the baronet, intent upon pursuing his better schemes, for some time only gave the artful man the hearing. At last, however (for curiosity's sake), he was prevailed upon to make the aunt a visit. The niece was not absent. She more than answered all that Filmer had said in her praise, as to the beauty of her person. Sir Thomas repeated his visits. The girl was well tutored; behaved with prudence, with *reserve* rather; and, in short, made such an impression on his heart, that he declared to Filmer that he could not live without her.

Advantage was endeavoured to be taken of his infatuation. He offered high terms: but for some time the aunt insisted upon his marrying her niece.

Sir Thomas had been too long a *leader* in the free world, to be so *taken-in*, as it is called. But at last a proposal was made him, from no part of which the aunt declared she would recede, though the poor girl (who, it was pretended, loved him above all the men she had ever seen) were to break her heart for him. A fine piece of flattery, Lucy, to a man who numbered near three times her years, and who was still fond of making conquests.

The terms were: that he should settle upon the young woman 500*l.* a year for her life; and on her father and mother, if they could be brought to consent to the (infamous) bargain, 200*l.* a year for their joint and separate lives: that Miss Obrien should live at one of Sir Thomas's seats in England, be allowed genteel equipages, his livery; and even (for her credit's sake in the eye of her own relations, who

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were of figure) to be connived at in taking his name. The aunt left it to his generosity to reward *her* for the part she had taken, and was to take, to bring all this about with the parents and girl.

Sir Thomas thought these demands much too high: he stood out for some time; but artifice being used on all sides to draw him on, *love*, as it is called (prostituted word!) obliged him to comply.

His whole concern was now, how to provide for this new expense, without *robbing*, as he called it, his son [daughters were but daughters, and no part of the question with him]; and to find excuses for continuing the young gentleman abroad.

Mrs. Oldham had for some time been uneasy herself, and made him so by her compunction on their guilty commerce; and, on Sir Thomas's communicating his intention to recall his son, hinted her wishes to be allowed to quit the house in Essex, and to retire both from that and him; for fear of making the young gentleman as much her enemy, as the two sisters avowedly were.

Sir Thomas, now that he was acquainted with Miss Obrien, better relished Mrs. Oldham's proposal than otherwise he would have done: and before he actually signed and sealed with Miss Obrien's aunt, for her niece, he thought it best to sound that unhappy woman, whether she in earnest desired to retire; and if so, what were her expectations from him: resolving, in order to provide for both expenses, to cut down timber, that, he said, groaned for the axe; but which hitherto he had let stand, as a resource for his son, and to enable him to clear incumbrances that he had laid upon a part of his estate.

Accordingly he set out for his seat in Essex.

There, while he was planning future schemes of living, and reckoning upon his savings in several articles, in order the better to support an expense so guiltily to be incurred; and had actually begun to treat with Mrs. Oldham; who agreed, at the first word, to retire; not knowing but his motive, (poor man!) as well as hers, was reformation:—There was he attacked by a violent fever, which in three days deprived him of the use of the reason he had so much abused.

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Mr. Bever, his English steward, posted down, on the first news he had of his being taken ill, hoping to get him to sign the ready drawn up releases. But the eagerness he shewed to have this done, giving cause of suspicion to Mrs. Oldham, she would not let him see his master, though he arrived on the second day of Sir Thomas's illness, which was before the fever had seized his brain.

Mr. Filmer had been to meet, and conduct to London, Mrs. Obrien, the mother of the girl, who came over to see the sale of the poor victim's honour completed: [could you have thought, Lucy, there was such a mother in the world?] and it was not till the fifth day of the unhappy man's illness that he got to him, with his releases also already drawn up, as well as the articles between him and the Obriens, in hopes to find him well enough to sign both. He was in a visible consternation when he found his master so ill. He would have stayed in the house to watch the event; but Mrs. Oldham not permitting him to do so, he put up at the next village, in hopes of a favourable turn of the distemper.

On the sixth day, the physicians giving no hopes of Sir Thomas's recovery, Mrs. Oldham sent to acquaint the two young ladies with his danger; and they instantly set out to attend their father.

They could not be supposed to love Mrs. Oldham; and taking Mr. Grandison's advice, who accompanied them, they let the unhappy woman know, that there was no farther occasion for her attendance on their father. She had prudently, before, that she might give the less offence to the two ladies, removed her son by her former husband, and her two children by Sir Thomas; but insisted on continuing about him, and in the house, as well from motives of tenderness, as for her own security, lest she should be charged with embezzlements; for she expected not mercy from the family, if Sir Thomas died.

Poor woman! what a tenure was that by which she held!

Miss Caroline consented, and brought her sister to consent, that she should stay; absolutely against Mr. Grandison's advice; who, libertine as he was himself, was very zealous to punish a poor Magdalen, who *though* faulty, was not so faulty as himself. Wicked people, I believe, my dear,

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are the severest punishers of those wicked people, who administer not to their own particular gratifications. Can mercy be expected from such! Mercy is a *virtue*.

It was shocking to the last degree to the worthy daughters to hear their raving father call upon nobody so often as upon Miss Obrien; though they then knew nothing of the girl, nor of the treaty on foot for her; nor could Mrs. Oldham inform them who or what she was. Sometimes, when the unhappy man was quietest, he would call upon his son, in words generally of kindness and love; once in particular, crying out—Oh save me! save me! my Grandison, by thy presence!—I shall be consumed by the fire that is already lighted up in my boiling blood.

On the ninth day, no hope being left, and the physician declaring him to be a dying man, they despatched a letter by a messenger to hasten over their brother, who (having left his ward, Miss Emily Jervois, at Florence, in the protection of the worthy Dr. Bartlett) was come to Paris, as he had written, in expectation of receiving there his father's permission to return to England.

On the eleventh day of his illness, Sir Thomas came a little to himself. He knew his daughters. He wept over them. He wished he had been kinder to them. He was sensible of his danger. Several times he lifted up his feeble hands and dying eyes, repeating, God is just. I am, I have been, very wicked! Repentance! repentance! how hard a task! said he once to the minister who attended him, and whose prayers he desired. And Mrs. Oldham once coming in his sight—O Mrs. Oldham! said he, what is this world now? What would I give—But repent, repent—Put your good resolutions in practice, lest I have more souls than my own to answer for.

Soon after this his delirium returned; and he expired about eleven at night, in dreadful agonies. Unhappy man! —Join a tear with mine, my Lucy, on the awful exit of Sir Thomas Grandison, though we knew him not.

Poor man! in the pursuit—Poor man!—He lived not to see his beloved son!——

The two daughters, and Mr. Grandison, and Mrs. Oldham (for her own security), put their respective seals on

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every place, at that house, where papers, or anything of value, were supposed to be reposited: and Mr. Grandison, assuming that part of the management, dismissed Mrs. Oldham from the house; and would not permit her to take with her more than one suit of clothes, besides those she had on. She wept bitterly, and complained of harsh treatment: but was not pitied; and was referred by Mr. Grandison to his absent cousin for still more rigorous justice.

She appealed to the ladies; but they reproached her with having lived a life of shame, against better knowledge; and said, that now she must take the consequence. Her punishment was but beginning: their brother would do her strict justice, they doubted not: but a man of his virtue, they were sure, would abhor her. She had misled their father, they said. It was not in *his* temper to be cruel to his children. She had lived upon their fortunes; and now they had nothing but their brother's favour to depend upon.

Daughters so dutiful, my Lucy, did right to excuse their father all they could: but Mrs. Oldham suffered for all.

I am so much interested in this important history, that I have not the heart to break into it, to tell you how very agreeably I pass my time with these ladies, and Lord L——, in those parts of the day, when we are all assembled. Miss Emily has a fine mind; gentle, delicate, innocently childish beyond her stature and womanly appearance; but not her years. The two ladies are very good to her. Lord L—— is an excellent man.

This is Friday morning: and no Sir Charles! *Canterbury* is surely a charming place. Was you ever at *Canterbury*, Lucy?

To-morrow, Lady D—— is to visit my aunt. My letter to my aunt will be in time, I hope. I long to know—Yet why should I?—But Lady D—— is so *good* a woman! I hope she will take kindly my denial; and look upon it as an absolute one.

I have a great deal more of the family-history to give you: I wish I could write as fast as we can talk. But, Lucy, concerning the lady, with whose father Sir Thomas was in treaty for his son: don't you want to know something more

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about her?—But, ah! my dear, be this as it may, there *is* a lady in whose favour both sisters interest themselves. I have found that out. Nor will it be long, I suppose, before I shall be informed who she is; and whether or not Sir Charles encourages the proposal.

Adieu, my Lucy! You will soon have another letter from your HARRIET BYRON.

—o—

LETTER LXIV.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

YOU see, my dear, how many important matters depended on the conduct and determination of the young baronet.

Lord L—— was at this time in Scotland, where he had seen married two of his three sisters; and was busying himself in putting his affairs in such a way, as should enable him to depend the less either on the justice or generosity of Sir Thomas Grandison, whose beloved daughter he was impatient to call his.

Miss Charlotte was absolutely dependent upon her brother's generosity; and both sisters had the reason to be the more uneasy, as it was now, in the worldly-wise way of thinking, become his *interest* to keep up the distance which their unhappy father had been solicitous to create between them, from a policy low, and entirely unworthy of him.

The unhappy Mrs. Oldham had already received a severe instance of the change of her fortune; and had no reason to doubt, but that the sisters (who had always, from the time she was set over them as their governess, looked upon her with an evil eye; and afterwards had but too just a pretence for their aversion), would incense against her a brother, whose fortune had been lessened by his father's profusion: the few relations she had living, were people of honour, who had renounced all correspondence with her, from the time she had thrown herself so absolutely into the power of Sir Thomas Grandison: and she had three sons to take care of.

Bever and Filmer, the English and Irish stewards, were attending Sir Charles's arrival with great impatience, in hopes he would sign those accounts of theirs, to which they

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had no reason to question but his father would have set his hand, had he not been taken so suddenly ill, and remained delirious almost to the end of his life.

Miss Obrien, her mother, and aunt, I shall mention in another place.

Lord W—— had a great dislike to his nephew, for no other reason, as I have said, than because he was his father's favourite. Yet were not his nieces likely to find their uncle more their friend for that. He was indeed almost entirely under the management of a woman, who had not either the birth, the education, the sense, or moderation of Mrs. Oldham, to put in the contrary scale against her lost virtue; but abounded, it seems, in a low selfish cunning, by which she never failed to carry every point she set her heart upon: for, as is usual, they say, with these keeping men, Lord W—— would yield up, to avoid her teasing, what he would not have done to a wife of fortune and family, who might have been a credit to his own: but the *real slave* imagined himself master of his *liberty;* and sat down satisfied with the sound of the word.

The suspended treaty of marriage with Lord N——'s sister was also to be taken into consideration, either to be proceeded with, or broken off, as should be concluded by both parties.

This was the situation of affairs in the family, when Sir Charles arrived.

He returned not an answer to his sister's notification of his father's danger; but immediately set out for Calais, embarked, and the same day arrived at the house of his late father in St. James's Square. His sisters concluded, that he would be in town nearly as soon as a letter could come; they therefore every hour, for two days together, expected him.

Judge, my dear, from the foregoing circumstances (sisterly love out of the question, which yet it could not be), how awful must be to them, after eight or nine years' absence, the first appearance of a brother, on whom the whole of their fortunes depended; and to whom they had been accused by a father, now so lately departed, of want of duty; their brother's duty unquestionable!

In the *same* moment he alighted from his post-chaise,

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the door was opened; he entered; and his two sisters met him in the hall.

The graceful youth of seventeen, with fine curling auburn locks waving upon his shoulders; delicate in complexion; intelligence sparkling in his fine free eyes; and goodhumour sweetening his lively features; they remembered: and, forgetting the womanly beauties into which their own features were ripened in the same space of time, they seemed not to expect that manly stature and air, and that equal vivacity and intrepidity, which every one who sees this brother, admires in his noble aspect: an aspect then appearing more solemn than usual; an unburied and beloved father in his thoughts.

Oh, my brother! said Caroline, with open arms: but, shrinking from his embrace; *may* I say, my brother?—and was just fainting. He clasped her in his arms, to support her——

Charlotte, surprised at her sister's emotion, and affected with his presence, ran back into the room they had both quitted, and threw herself upon a settee.

Her brother followed her into the room, his arm round Miss Caroline's waist, soothing her; and with eyes of expectation, My Charlotte! said he, his inviting hand held out, and hastening towards the settee. She then found her feet; and throwing her arms about his neck, he folded both sisters to his bosom: Receive, my dearest sisters, receive your brother, your friend; assure yourselves of my unabated love.

That assurance, they said, was balm to their hearts; and when each was seated, he, sitting over against them, looked first on one, then on the other; and, taking each by the hand, Charming women! said he: how I admire my sisters! You *must* have minds answerable to your persons. What pleasure, what pride, shall I take in my sisters!

My dear Charlotte! said Miss Caroline, taking her sister's other hand, has not our brother, now we see him near, all the brother in his aspect? His goodness only looks stronger, and more perfect: What was I afraid of?

My heart also sunk, said Charlotte; I know not why. But we feared—Indeed, sir, we both feared—Oh, my brother! —Tears trickling down the cheeks of each—We meant not to be *undutiful*——

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Love your brother, my sisters, as he will endeavour to deserve your love. My mother's daughters could not be undutiful! Mistake only!—Unhappy misapprehension! We have all something—Shades, as well as lights, there must be!—A kind, a dutiful veil——

He pressed the hand of each with his lips, arose, went to the window, and drew out his handkerchief.

What must he have had in his thoughts? No doubt, but his father's unhappy turn, and recent departure! No wonder, that such a son could not, without pious emotion, bear the reflections that must crowd into his mind at that instant!

Then, turning towards them, Permit me, my dear sisters, said he, to retire for a few moments. He turned his face from them. My father, said he, demands this tribute. I will not ask *your* excuse, my sisters.

They joined in the payment of it; and waited on him to his apartment, with silent respect. No ceremony, I hope, my Caroline, my Charlotte. We were true sisters and brother a few years ago. See your Charles as you saw him then. Let not absence, which has increased my love, lessen yours.

Each sister took a hand, and would have kissed it. He clasped his arms about them both, and saluted them.

He cast his eye on his father's and mother's pictures with some emotion; then on them; and again saluted each.

They withdrew. He waited on them to the stairs' head. Sweet obligingness! Amiable sisters! In a quarter of an hour I seek your presence.

Tears of joy trickled down their cheeks. In half an hour he joined them in another dress, and resaluted his sisters with an air of tenderness that banished fear, and left room for nothing but sisterly love.

Mr. Grandison came in soon after. That gentleman, who (as I believe I once before mentioned) had affected, in support of his own free way of life, to talk how he would laugh at his cousin Charles, when he came to England, on his *pious* turn, as he called it; and even to boast, that he would enter him into the town diversions, and make a *man* of him; was struck with the dignity of his person, and yet charmed with the freedom of his behaviour. Good God!

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said he to the ladies afterwards, what a fine young man is your brother!—What a self-denier was your father!——

The ladies retiring, Mr. Grandison entered upon the circumstances of Sir Thomas's illness and death; which, he told his sisters, he touched *tenderly*. As tenderly, I suppose, as a man of his unfeeling heart *could* touch such a subject. He inveighed against Mrs. Oldham; and with some exultation over her, told his cousin what they had done as to her; and exclaimed against her for the state she had lived in; and the difficulty she made to resign Sir Thomas to his daughter's care in his illness; and particularly for presuming to insist upon putting her seal with theirs to the cabinets and closet, where they supposed were any valuables.

Sir Charles heard all this without saying one word, either of approbation or otherwise.

Are you not pleased with what we have done, as to this vile woman, Sir Charles?

I have no doubt, cousin, replied Sir Charles, that everything was designed for the best.

And then Mr. Grandison, as he told the sisters, ridiculed the unhappy woman on her grief and mortified behaviour, when she was obliged to quit the house, where, he said, she had reigned so long lady paramount.

Sir Charles asked, if they had searched for or found a will?

Mr. Grandison said, they had looked in every probable place; but found none.

What I think to do, cousin, said Sir Charles, is, to inter the venerable remains (I must always speak in this dialect, sir) with those of my mother. This, I know, was his desire. I will have an elegant, but not sumptuous, monument erected to the memory of both, with a modest inscription, that shall rather be matter of instruction to the living, than a panegyric on the departed. The funeral shall be decent, but not ostentatious. The difference in the expense shall be privately applied to relieve or assist distressed housekeepers, or some of my father's poor tenants, who have large families, and have not been wanting in their honest endeavours to maintain them. My sisters, I hope, will not think themselves neglected, if I spare them the pain of conferring with them on a subject that must afflict them.

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These sentiments were new to Mr. Grandison. He told the sisters what Sir Charles had said. I did not contradict him, said he: but as Sir Thomas had so magnificent a mind, and always lived up to it, I should have thought he ought to have been honoured with a magnificent funeral. But I cannot but own, however, that what your brother said had something great and noble in it.

The two ladies, on their brother's hinting his intentions to them, acquiesced with all he proposed; and all was performed according to directions which he himself wrote down. He allowed of his sisters' compliance with the fashion: but he in person saw performed, with equal piety and decorum, the last offices.

Sir Charles is noted for his great dexterity in business. Were I to express myself in the language of Miss Grandison, I should say, that a sunbeam is not more penetrating. He goes to the bottom of an affair at once, and wants but to hear both sides of a question to determine; and when he determines, his execution can only be stayed by perverse accidents, that lie out of the reach of human foresight: and when he finds *that* to be the case, yet the thing right to be done, he changes his methods of proceeding; as a man would do, who, finding himself unable to pursue his journey by one road, because of a sudden inundation, takes another, which, though a little about, carries him home in safety.

As soon as the solemnity was over, Sir Charles, leaving everything at Grandison Hall as he found it, and the seals unbroken, came to town, and, in the presence of his sisters, broke the seals that had been affixed to the cabinets and escritoirs in the house there.

The ladies told him, that their bills were ready for his inspection; and that they had a balance in their hands. His answer was, I hope, my sisters, we shall have but one interest. It is for you to make demands upon me, and for me to answer them as I shall be able.

He made memorandums of the contents of many papers, with surprising expedition: and then locked them up. He found a bank note of 350*l.* in the private drawer of one of the bureaus in the apartment that was his father's. Be pleased, my sister, said he, presenting it to Miss Caro-

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line, to add that to the money in your hands, to answer family calls.

He then went with his sisters to the house in Essex. When there, he told them it was necessary for Mrs. Oldham (who had lodgings at a neighbouring farm-house) to be present at the breaking of the seals, as she had hers affixed; and accordingly sent for her.

They desired to be excused seeing her.

It will be a concern to me, said he, to see her: but what *ought* to be done *must* be done.

The poor woman came with fear and trembling.

You will not, Lucy, be displeased with an account of what passed on the occasion. I was very attentive to it, as given by Miss Grandison, whose memory was aided by the recollection of her sister. And, as I am used to aim at giving affecting scenes in the very words of the persons, as near as I can, to make them appear lively and natural, you will expect that I should attempt to do so in this case.

Sir Charles, not expecting Mrs. Oldham would be there so soon, was in his stud with his groom and coachman, looking upon his horses: for there were most of the hunters and racers, some of the finest beasts in the kingdom.

By the mistake of Miss Caroline's maid the poor woman was shown into the room where the two ladies were. She was in great confusion; courtesied; wept; and stood, as well as she could stand; but leaned against the tapestry-hung wall.

How came this? said Miss Caroline to her maid. *She* was not to be shown in to us.

I beg pardon; courtesying, and was for withdrawing; but stopt on Charlotte's speech to her—My *brother* sent for you, madam—Not *we*, I assure you.—He says it is necessary, as you thought fit to put your seal with ours to the locked-up places, that you should be present at the breaking them. Yet he will see you with as much pain as you give us. Prepare yourself to see him. You seem mighty unfit—No wonder!

You have heard, Lucy, that Charlotte attributes a great deal of alteration for the better in her temper, and even in her heart, to the example of her brother.

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Indeed, I *am* unfit, *very* unfit, said the poor woman. Let me, ladies, bespeak your generosity: a little of your pity: a little of your countenance. I am, indeed, an unhappy woman!

And so you deserve to be.

I am sure *we* are the sufferers, said Caroline.

Lord L——, as she owned, was then in her head, as well as heart.

If I may withdraw without seeing Sir Charles, I should take it for a favour. I find I cannot bear to see him. I insist not upon being present at the breaking the seals. I throw myself upon your mercy, ladies, and upon his.

Cruel girls! shall I call them, Lucy? I think I will—*Cruel* girls! They asked her not to sit down, though they saw the terror she was in; and that she had the modesty to forbear sitting in their presence.

What an humbling thing is the consciousness of having lived faulty, when calamity seizes upon the heart!—But shall not virtue be appeased, when the hand of God is acknowledged in the words, countenance, and behaviour of the offender? Yet, perhaps, it is hard for sufferers—Let me consider—Have I from my heart forgiven Sir Hargrave Pollexfen?—I will examine into that another time.

And so you have put yourself into mourning, madam?

Shall I say that Caroline said this, and what follows? Yet I am glad it was not Charlotte, methinks; for Caroline thought herself a sufferer by her, in an especial manner—However, I am sorry it was either.

Pretty *deep* too! Your weeds, I suppose, are at your lodgings——

You have been told, Lucy, that Mrs. Oldham by many was called Lady Grandison; and that her birth, her education, good sense, though all was not sufficient to support her virtue against necessity and temptation (poor woman!) might have given her a claim to the title.

Indeed, ladies, I am a *real* mourner: but I never myself assumed a character, to which it was never in my thought to solicit a right.

Then, *madam*, the world does you injustice, *madam*, said Charlotte.

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Here, ladies, are the keys of the stores; of the confectionary; of the wine-vaults. You demanded them not, when you dismissed me from this house. I thought to send them: but by the time I could provide myself with a lodging, you were gone; and left only two common servants, besides the groom and helpers: and I thought it was best to keep the keys, till I could deliver them to your order, or Sir Charles's. I have not been a bad manager, ladies, considered as a housekeeper. All I have in the world is under the seals. I am at yours and your brother's mercy.

The sisters ordered their woman to take the keys, and bring them to the foot of their thrones. Dear ladies, forgive me if you should, by surprise, see this. I know that you think and act in a different manner now.

Here comes my brother! said Caroline.

You'll soon know, madam, what you have to trust to from *him*, said Charlotte.

The poor woman trembled, and turned pale. Oh how her heart must throb!

—o—

LETTER LXV.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Sir Charles entered. She was near the door. His sisters were at the other end of the room.

He bowed to her—Mrs. Oldham, I presume, said he—Pray, madam, be seated. I sent to you, that you might see the seals—Pray, madam, sit down.

He took her hand, and led her to a chair not far distant from them; and sat down in one between them and her.

His sisters owned they were startled at his complaisance to her. Dear ladies; they forgot, at that moment, that *mercy* and *justice* are sister graces, and cannot be separated in a virtuous bosom.

Pray, madam, compose yourself; looking upon her with eyes of anguish and pity mingled, as the ladies said, they afterwards recollected with more approbation than at the time. What, my Lucy, must be the reflections of this humane man, respecting his father, and her, at that moment?

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He turned to his sisters, as if to give Mrs. Oldham time to recover herself. A flood of tears relieved her. She tried to suppress her audible sobs, and, most considerately, he would not hear them. Her emotions attracting the eyes of the ladies, he took them off, by asking them something about a picture that hung on the other side of the room.

He then drew his chair nearer to her, and again taking her trembling hand—I am not a stranger to your melancholy story, Mrs. Oldham—be not discomposed——

He stopt to give her a few moments' time to recover herself—resuming; See in me a friend, ready to thank you for all your past good offices, and to forget all mistaken ones.

She could not bear this. She threw herself at his feet. He raised her to her chair.

Poor Mr. Oldham, said he, was unhappily careless! Yet I have been told he loved you, and that you merited his love—your misfortunes threw you into the knowledge of our family. You have been a faithful manager of the affairs of this house—by written evidences I can justify you; evidences that no one here will, I am sure, dispute.

It was plain that his father had written in her praise, as an economist; the only light in which this pious son was then willing to consider her.

Indeed, I have—and I would still have been——

No more of that, madam. Mr. Grandison, who is a good-natured man, but a little hasty, has told me that he treated you with unkindness. He owns you were patient under it. Patience never yet was a solitary virtue. He thought you wrong for insisting to put your seal: but he was mistaken: you did right, as to the thing; and I dare say, a woman of your prudence did not wrong in the manner. No one can judge properly of another, that cannot be that very other in imagination, when he takes the judgment-seat.

Oh, my brother! Oh, my brother! said both ladies at one time—half in admiration, though half-concerned, at a goodness so eclipsing.

Bear with me, my sisters. We have *all* something to be forgiven for.

They knew not how far they were concerned, in his opinion, in the admonition, from what their father had written of

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them. They owned, that they were mortified: yet knew not how to be angry with a brother, who, though more than an equal sufferer with them, could preserve *his* charity.

He then made a motion, dinner-time, as he said, not being near, for chocolate; and referred to Mrs. Oldham to direct it, as knowing best where everything was. She referred to the delivered-up keys. Caroline called in her servant, and gave them to her. Sir Charles desired Mrs. Oldham to be so good as to direct the maid.

The ladies easily saw, that he intended by this to relieve the poor woman by some little employment; and to take the opportunity of her absence, to endeavour to reconcile them to his intentions, as well as manner of behaving to her.

The moment she was gone out of the room, he thus addressed himself to the ladies:

My dear sisters, let me beg of you to think favourably of me on this occasion. I would not disoblige you for the world. I consider not the case of this poor woman, on the foot of her own merits, with regard to us. Our father's memory is concerned. Was *he* accountable to us, was *she,* for what each did? Neither of them was. She is entitled to justice, for its own sake: to generosity, for ours: to kindness, for my father's. Mr. Grandison accused her of living in too much state, as he called it. Can that be said to be *her* fault? With regard to *us,* was it *anybodys?* My father's magnificent spirit is well known. He was often at this house. Wherever he was, he lived in the same taste. He praises to me Mrs. Oldham's economy in several of his letters. He had a right to do what he would with his own fortune. It was not *ours* till now. Whatever he *has* left us, he might have still lessened it. That economy is all that concerns us in interest; and that is in her favour. If any act of kindness to my sisters was wanting from the parent, they will rejoice that they *deserved* what they hope to meet with from him: and where the parent had an option, they will be glad that they acquiesced under it. He could have given Mrs. Oldham a title to a name that would have commanded our respect, if not our reverence. My sisters have enlarged minds: they are daughters of the most charitable, the most forgiving of women. Mr. Grandison (it could not be *you*) has carried

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too severe a hand towards her. Yet he meant service to us all. I was willing, before I commended this poor woman to your *mercy* (since it was necessary to see her), to judge of her behaviour. Is she not humble enough? From my soul I pity her. She loved my father; and I have no doubt but mourns for him in secret; yet dares not own, dares not plead, her love. I am willing to consider her only as one who has executed a principal office in this house: it becomes us so to behave to her, as that the world should think we consider her in that light only. As to the *living proofs*, (unhappy innocents!) I am concerned, that what are the delight of other parents, are the disgrace of this. But let *us* not, by resentments, publish faults that could not be *hers only*.—Need I say more? It would pain me to be obliged to it. With pain have I said thus much. The circumstances of the case are such, that I cannot give it its full force. I ask it of you as a favour, not as a right (I should hate myself, were I capable of exerting to the utmost any power that may be devolved upon me), that you will be so good as to leave the conduct of this affair to me. You will greatly oblige me, if you can give me your cheerful acquiescence.

They answered by tears. They could not speak.

By this time Mrs. Oldham returned; and, in an humble manner, offered chocolate to each young lady. They bent their necks, not their bodies, with cold civility, as they owned; each extending her stately hand, as if she knew not whether she should put it out or not.

Methinks I see them. How could such gracious girls be so ungracious, after what Sir Charles had said!

Their brother, they saw, seemed displeased. He took the salver from Mrs. Oldham. Pray, madam, sit down, said he, offering her a dish, which she declined; and held the toasted bread to his sisters; who then were ready enough to take each some—and when they had drank their chocolate; now, Mrs. Oldham, said he, I will attend you—sisters, you will give me your company.

They arose to follow him. The poor woman courtesied, I warrant, and stood by while they passed. And methinks I see the dear girls bridle, and walk as stately, and as upright, as duchesses may be supposed to do in a coronation procession.

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Miss Grandison acknowledged, that she grudged her brother's extraordinary complaisance to Mrs. Oldham; and said to her sister, as arm in arm they went out, Politeness is a charming thing, Caroline!

I don't quite understand it, replied the other.

They did not intend their brother should hear what they said: but he did; and turned back to them (Mrs. Oldham being at a distance, and, on his speaking low, dropping still further behind them): Don't you, my sisters, do too little, and I will not do too much. She is a gentlewoman. She is unhappy from *within*. Thank God, *you* are not. And she is not now, nor ever was, your servant.

They reddened, and looked upon each other in some confusion.

He pressed each of their hands, as in love. Don't let me give you concern, said he; only permit me to remind you, while it is yet in time, that you have an opportunity given you to shew yourselves Grandisons.

When they came to the chamber in which Sir Thomas died, and which was his usual apartment, Mrs. Oldham turned pale, and begged to be excused attending them in it. She wept. You will find everything there, sir, said she, to be as it ought. I am ready to answer all questions. Permit me to wait in the adjoining drawing-room.

Sir Charles allowed her request.

Poor woman! said he: how unhappily circumstanced is she, that she dares not, in *this* company, shew the tenderness, which is the glory, not only of the female, but of the human nature!

In one of the cabinets in that chamber they found a beautiful little casket, and a paper wafered upon the back of it; with these words written in Sir Thomas's hand, *My wife's jewels*, &c.

The key was tied to one of the silver handles.

Had you not my mother's jewels divided between you? asked he.

My father once shewed us this casket at Grandison Hall, answered Caroline. We thought it was still there.

My dear sisters, let me ask you: did my father forbear presenting these to you, from any declared *misapprehension* of your want of duty to him?

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No, replied Miss Caroline. But he told us they should be ours when we married. You have heard, I daresay, that he was not fond of seeing us dressed.

It must have been *misapprehension* only, had it been so. You could not be undutiful to a *father*.

He would not permit it to be opened before him: but presenting it to them, Receive your right, my sisters. It is heavy. I hope there is more than jewels in it. I know that my mother used to deposit in it her little hoard. I am sure there can be no dispute between such affectionate sisters, on the partition of the contents of this casket.

While their brother was taking minutes of papers, the ladies retired to open this casket.

They found three purses in it; in one of which was an India bond of 500*l.* enclosed in a paper, thus inscribed by Lady Grandison—*From my maiden money.* 120 Caroluses were also in this purse in two papers; the one inscribed, *From my Aunt Molly;* the other, *From my Aunt Kitty.*

In the second purse were 115 Jacobuses, in a paper, thus inscribed by the same lady: *Presents made at different times by my honoured mamma, Lady W——,* three bank notes, and an India bond, to the amount of 300*l.*

The third purse was thus labelled, as Lady L—— shewed me by a copy she had of it in her memorandum book:

'*For my beloved son:* In acknowledgment of his duty to 'his father and me from infancy to this hour, Jan. 1, '17 .—Of his love to his sisters—Of the generosity of 'his temper; never once having taken advantage of the 'indulgence shewn him by parents so fond of him, that, 'as the only son of an ancient family, he might have 'done what he pleased with them—Of his love of truth: 'and of his modesty, courage, benevolence, steadiness 'of mind, docility, and other great and amiable qualities, 'by which he gives a moral assurance of making A 'GOOD MAN—GOD grant it. Amen!'

The ladies immediately carried this purse, thus labelled, to their brother. He took it; read the label, turning his face from his sisters, as he read:—Excellent woman! said he, when he had read it, *being dead, she speaks.* May her pious

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prayer be answered! looking up. Then opening the purse, he found five coronation medals of different princes in it, and several others of value; a gold snuff-box, in which, wrapt in cotton, were three diamond rings; one signified to be his grandfather's; the two others, an uncle's and brother's of Lady Grandison: but what was more valuable to him than all the rest, the ladies said, was a miniature picture of his mother, set in gold; an admirable likeness, they told me; and they would get their brother to let me see it.

Neglecting all the rest, he eagerly took it out of the shagreen case; gazed at it in silence; kissed it; a tear falling from his eye. He then put it to his heart: withdrew for a few moments; and returned with a cheerful aspect.

The ladies told him what was in the other two purses. They said they made no scruple of accepting the jewels; but the bonds, the notes, and the money, they offered to him.

He asked, if there were no particular direction upon either? They answered, No.

He took them; and emptying them upon the table, mingled the contents of both together: there may be a difference in the value of each: thus mingled, you, my sisters, will equally divide them between you. This picture (putting his hand on his bosom, where it yet was) is of infinitely more value than all the three purses contained besides.

You will excuse these particularities, my dear friends: but if you do not, I can't help it. We are all apt, I believe, to pursue the subjects that most delight us. Don't grudge me my pleasure! Perhaps I shall pay for it. I admire this man more than I can express.

Saturday night—and *no* Sir Charles Grandison. With all my heart!

—o—

LETTER LXVI.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

When Sir Charles and his sisters had looked over every other place in his father's apartment, they followed Mrs. Oldham to hers.

A very handsome apartment, upon my word!

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How *could* Miss Grandison—she knew the situation the unhappy woman had been in: mistress of that house.

Her brother looked at her.

Mrs. Oldham shewed them which of the furniture and pictures (some of the latter valuable ones) she had brought into the house, saved, as she said, from the wreck of her husband's fortune—but, said she, with the consent of creditors. I, for *my part*, did not wrong anybody.

In that closet, sir, continued she, pointing to it, is all that I account myself worth in the world. Mr. Grandison was pleased to put his seal upon the door. I besought him to let me take 50*l.* out of it, having but very little money about me, but he would not: his réfusal, besides the disgrace, has put me to some shifts. But, weeping, I throw myself upon your mercy, sir.

The sisters frankly owned, that they hardened each other by fault finding. They whispered, that she expected no mercy from *them*, it was plain. Oh what a glory belongs to goodness, as well in its influences as in itself! Not even these two amiable sisters, as Miss Charlotte once acknowledged, were so noble in themselves before their brother's arrival, as they are now.

Assure yourself of justice, madam, said Sir Charles. Mr. Grandison is hasty: but he would have done you justice, I daresay. He thought he was acting for a trust.—You may have letters, you may have things, here in this closet, that we have no business with.—Then, breaking the seal; I leave it to you to shew us anything proper for us to take account of. The rest I wish not to see.

My ladies, sir—they will be pleased to——

Yes, Mrs. Oldham, said Caroline: and was putting herself before her brother, and so was her sister, while Sir Charles was withdrawing from the closet: but he took each by her hand, interrupting Caroline——

NO, *Mrs. Oldham*—Do you lay out things as you please; we will step into the next apartment.

He accordingly led them both out.

You are very generous, sir, said Miss Grandison.

I *would* be so, Charlotte. Ought not the private drawers of women to be sacred?

But such a *creature*, sir—said Miss Caroline——

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Every creature is entitled to justice—Can ladies forget decorum? You see she was surprised by Mr. Grandison. She has suffered disgrace: has been put to difficulties.

Well, sir, if she will do *justice*——

Remember (with looks of meaning) whose *housekeeper* she was.

They owned they were daunted [and so, dear ladies, you ought to have been], but not convinced at that instant. It is generous to own this, ladies; because the behaviour makes not for your honour.

Mrs. Oldham, with tears in her eyes, came courtesying to the ladies and their brother, offering to conduct them into her closet. They found, that she had spread on her table in it, and in the two windows, and in the chairs, letters, papers, laces, fine linen, &c.

These papers, sir, said she, belong to you. I was *bid* to keep them safe. [Poor woman! she knew not how to say, *by whom* bid.] You will see, sir, the seals are whole.

Perhaps a *will*, said he.

No, sir, I believe not. I was told they belonged to the Irish estate. Alas! and she wiped her eyes, I have reason to think there was not time for a will——

I suppose, Mrs. Oldham, you *urged* for a will—said Miss Charlotte.

Indeed, ladies, I often did; I own it.

I don't doubt it, said Miss Caroline.

And very *prudently*, said Sir Charles. I myself have always had a will by me. I should think it a kind of *presumption* to be a week without one.

In this drawer, sir, are the money, and notes, and securities that I have been getting together; I do assure you, sir; very honestly—pulling out a drawer in the cabinet.

To what amount, Mrs. Oldham, if I may be *so bold?* asked Caroline.

No matter, sister Caroline, to what amount, said Sir Charles. You hear Mrs. Oldham say, they are honestly got together. I daresay, that my father's bounty enabled even his meanest *servants* to save money. I would not keep one, that I thought did not. I make no comparisons, Mrs. Oldham: you are a gentlewoman.

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The two ladies only whispered to each other, as they owned, *so we think!*—Were there ever such perverse girls? I am afraid my uncle will think himself justified by them on this occasion, when he asserts, that it is one of the most difficult things in the world to put a woman right when she sets out wrong. If it be generally so with us, I am sure we ought to be very careful of prepossession.—And has he not said, Lucy, that the best women, when wrong, are most tenacious? It may be so: but then, I hope, he will allow, that at the time they *think* themselves right.

I believe there is near 1200*l.*, said Mrs. Oldham, and looked, the ladies observed, as if she was afraid of their censures.

Near 1200*l.*, Mrs. Oldham! said Miss Charlotte.—Lord, sister, how glad would we have been sometimes of as many shillings between us!

And what, Caroline, what, Charlotte, young ladies as you were, only growing up into women, and in your father's house, would you have done with more than current money? Now you have a claim to independency. I hope that 1200*l.* will not be the sum of either of your stores.

They courtesied, they said; but yet thought 1200*l.* a great saving.—Dear ladies! how could you forget, and what a pain would it have been for your brother to have reminded you, that Mrs. Oldham had *two* children; to say nothing of a third!

Trembling, as they owned, Here, said she, in this private drawer, are some presents—I disclaim them. If you believe me, ladies, I never wished for them. I never was seen in them but once. I never shall wear them—offering to pull out the drawer.

Forbear, Mrs. Oldham. Presents are yours. The money in that drawer is yours. Never will I either disparage or diminish my father's bounty. He had a right to do as he pleased. Have not we to do as we please? Had he made a will, would they not have been yours?—If you, Mrs. Oldham, if you, my sisters, can tell me of anything he but intended or inclined to do by any one of his people, that intention will I execute with as much exactness as if he had made a will, and it was part of it. Shall we do nothing but *legal* justice?—The law was not made for a man of conscience.

Lord bless me, my Lucy! what shall I do about this man?

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Here (would you believe it?) I laid down my pen; pondered, and wept for *joy*; I think, it *was* for joy, that there is such a young man in the world; for what else could it be? —And now, with a watery eye, twinkle, twinkle, do I resume it.

His sisters owned they were confounded; but that still the time was to come when they were to approve, from their hearts, of what he said and did.

Mrs. Oldham wept at his goodness. She wept, I make no doubt also, as a penitent.—If my ladies, said she, will be pleased to—and seemed to be about making an offer to them—of the jewels, as I suppose.

My sisters, Mrs. Oldham, said Sir Charles, interrupting her, are Grandisons. Pray, madam—holding in her hand, which was extended to the drawer——

She took out of another drawer 40*l.* and some silver. This, sir, is money that belongs to you. I received it in Sir Thomas's illness. I have some other monies; and my accounts wanted but a few hours of being perfected, when I was dismissed. They shall be completed, and laid before you.

Let this money, Mrs. Oldham, be a part of those accounts; declining, then, to take it.

There are letters, sir, said she. I would withhold nothing from you. I know not, if among some things, that I wish not *anybody* to see, there are not concerns, that you ought to be made acquainted with, relating to persons and things, particularly to Mr. Bever and Mr. Filmer, and their accounts; I *hope* they are good men.—You must see these letters, I believe.

Let me desire you, Mrs. Oldham, to make such extracts from those letters, or any others, as you think will concern me; and as soon as you can: for those gentlemen have written to me to sign their accounts; which, they hint, had my father's approbation.

She then told Sir Charles (as I have already related) how earnest Mr. Bever was to get to the speech of Sir Thomas; and how mortified Mr. Filmer was to find him incapable of writing his name: which both said was all that was wanted.

An honest man, said Sir Charles, fears not inspection.

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They shall want no favour from me. I hope nothing but justice from them.

She then showed him some other papers; and, while he was turning them over, the ladies and she withdrew to another apartment, in which, in two mahogany chests, was her wardrobe. They owned they were curious to inspect it, as she had always made a great figure. She was intending to oblige them; and had actually opened one of the chests, and, though reluctantly, taken out a gown, when Sir Charles entered.

He seemed displeased; and taking his sisters aside, Tell me, said he, can what this poor woman seems to be about proceed from her own motion? I beg of you to say, you put her upon it. I would not have reason to imagine that any woman, in such circumstances, could make a display of her apparel.

Why, the motion is partly mine, I must needs say, answered Charlotte.

Wholly, I hope; and the compliance owing to the poor woman's mortified situation. You are young women. You may not have considered this matter. Do you imagine that your curiosity will yield you pleasure? Don't you know what to expect from the magnificent and bountiful spirit of him to whose memory you owe duty?

They recollected themselves, blushed, and desired Mrs. Oldham to lock up the chest. She did; and seemed pleased to be excused from the mortifying task.

Ah, my Lucy! one thing I am afraid of; and that is, that Sir Charles Grandison, politely as he behaves to us all, thinks us women in general very contemptible creatures. I wish I knew that he did; and that for two reasons: that I might have something to think him blameable for: and to have the pride of assuring myself, that he would be convinced of that fault, were he to be acquainted with my grandmamma and aunt.

But, do you wonder that the sisters, whose minds were thus opened and enlarged by the example of such a brother, blazing upon them all at once, as I may say, in manly goodness, on his return from abroad, whither he set out a stripling, should, on all occasions, break out into raptures,

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whenever they mention THEIR brother?—Well may Miss Grandison depise her lovers, when she thinks of him and of them at the same time.

Sunday. Sir Charles is in town, we hear: came thither but last night—nay, for that matter, his sisters are more vexed at him than I am.—But what pretence have I to be disturbed? But I say of him, as I do of Lady D——: he is so good, that one would be willing to stand well with him.—Then is he my *brother*, you know.

—o—

LETTER LXVII.

Miss Byron. In continuation.

AFTER Sir Charles had inspected into everything in this house, and taken minutes of papers, letters, writings, &c., and locked up the plate and other valuables in one room, he ordered his servants to carry into Mrs. Oldham's apartment all that belonged to her; and gave her the key of that; and directed the housekeeper to be assisting to her in the removal of them, at her own time and pleasure, and to suffer her to come and go, at all times, with freedom and civility, as if she had never *left the house*, were his words.

How the poor woman courtesied and wept! The dear girls, I am afraid, then envied her—and perhaps expressed a grudging spirit; for they said, this was their brother's address to them at the time:

You may look upon the justice I aim at doing to persons who can claim *only* justice from me, as an earnest, that I will do *more* than justice to my beloved sisters: and you should have been the first to have found the fruits of the love I bear you, had I not been afraid, that prudence would have narrowed my intentions. The moment I know what I can do, I will do it; and I request you to hope largely: if I have ability, I will exceed your hopes.

My dear sisters, continued he, and took one hand of each, I am sorry, for your *spirits'* sake, that you are left in my power. The best of women was always afraid it would be so. But the moment I can, I will give you an absolute

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independence of your brother, that your actions and conduct may be all your own.

Surely, sir, said Caroline! (and they both wept), we must think it the highest felicity that we *are* in the power of such a brother. As to our *spirits*, sir——

She would have said more, but could not; and Charlotte took it up where her sister left off. Best of brothers! said she—our *spirits* shall, as much as possible (I can answer for both), be guided hereafter by yours. Forgive what you have seen amiss in us. But we *desire* to depend upon our good behaviour. We cannot, we will not, be independent of you.

We will talk of these matters, replied he, when we can do *more* than talk. I will ask you, Caroline, after your inclinations; and you, Charlotte, after *yours*, in the same hour that I know what I can do for you both, in the way of promoting them. Enter, meantime, upon your measures; reckon upon my best assistance: banish suspense. One of my first pleasures will be, to see you both happily married.

They did not *say*, when they related this to me, that they threw themselves at his feet, as to their better father, as well as brother: but I fancy they *did*.

He afterwards, at parting with Mrs. Oldham, said, I would be glad to know, madam, how you dispose of yourself: every unhappy person has a right to the good offices of those who are less embarrassed. When you are settled, pray let me know the manner: and if you acquaint me with the state of your affairs, and what you propose to do for and with those who are entitled to your first care, your confidence in me will not be misplaced.

And pray, and pray, asked I of the ladies, what said Mrs. Oldham? How did she behave upon this?

Our Harriet is strangely taken with Mrs. Oldham's story, said Miss Grandison: why, she wept plentifully, you may be sure. She clasped her hands, and kneeled to pray to God to bless him, and all that—She could not do otherwise.

See, Lucy!—But am I, my grandmamma, am I, my aunt, to blame? Is it inconsistent with the strictest virtue to be charmed with such a story?—May not virtue itself pity the lapsed?—Oh yes, it may! I am sure, you, and Sir Charles Grandison, will say it may. A while ago, I thought myself

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a poor creature, compared to these two ladies: but now I *believe* I am as good as they in some things.—But *they* had not such a grandmamma and aunt as I am blessed with: *they* lost their excellent mother, while they were young; and their brother is but lately come over: and his superior excellence, like sunshine, breaking out on a sudden, finds out, and brings to sight, those spots and freckles that were hardly before discoverable.

Sir Charles desired Mrs. Oldham would give in writing what she proposed to do for herself, and for those *who were under her care*. She did, at her first opportunity. It was, that she purposed going to London, for the sake of the young people's education: of turning into money what jewels, clothes, and plate, she should think above her then situation in life: of living retired in a little genteel house: and she gave in an estimate of her worth; to what amount the ladies knew not: but this they know, that their brother allows her an annuity, for the sake of her sons by his father: and they doubt not but he will be still kinder to them, when they are old enough to be put into the world.

This the ladies think an encouragement to a guilty life. I will not dare to pronounce upon it, because I may be thought partial to the generous man: but should be glad of my uncle's opinion. This, however, may be said, that Sir Charles Grandison has no vices of his own to cover by the extensiveness of his charity and beneficence; and if it be not goodness in him to do thus, it is greatness; and this, if it be not praiseworthy, is the first instance that I have known goodness and greatness of soul separable.

The brother and sisters went down, after this, to Grandison Hall; and Sir Charles had reason to be pleased with the good order in which he found everything there.

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LETTER LXVIII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

THE next thing the ladies mentioned was, Sir Charles's management with the two stewards.

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I will not aim at being very particular in this part of the family history.

When Sir Charles found that his father had left the inspection of each steward's account to the other, he entered into the examination of the whole himself; and though he allowed them several disputable and unproved charges, he brought them to acknowledge a much greater balance in his favour than they had made themselves debtors for. This was the use he made of detecting them to his sisters.—You see, sisters, that my father was not so profuse as some people thought him. He had partners in his estate; and I have reason to think that he often paid interest for his own money.

On his settling with Filmer, the treaty with Miss Obrien came out. Mr. Filmer had, by surprise, brought that beautiful girl into Sir Charles's presence; and he owned to his sisters that she was a very lovely creature.

But when the mother and aunt found, that he only admired her as a man would a fine picture, they insisted that Sir Thomas had promised to marry Miss Obrien privately; and produced two of his letters to her, that seemed to give ground for such an expectation. Sir Charles was grieved, for the sake of his father's memory, at this transaction; and much more, on finding that the unhappy man went down to his seat in Essex, his head and heart full of this scheme, when he was struck with his last illness.

A meeting was proposed by Filmer, between Sir Charles, the mother, the aunt, and himself, at the aunt's house in Pall Mall. Sir Charles was very desirous to conceal his father's frailty from the world. He met them: but, before he entered into discourse, made it his request to be allowed half an hour's conversation with Miss Obrien by herself; at the same time, praising, as it deserved, her beauty.

They were in hopes, that she would be able to make an impression on the heart of so young and so lively a man; and complied. Under pretence of preparing her for so unexpected a visit, her aunt gave her her cue: but instead of her captivating him, he brought her to such confessions, as sufficiently let him into the baseness of their views.

He returned to company, the young woman in his hand. He represented to the mother the wickedness of the part

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she had come over to act, in such strong terms that she fell into a fit. The aunt was terrified. The young creature wept: and vowed that she would be honest.

Sir Charles told them, that if they would give him up his father's two letters, and make a solemn promise never to open their lips on the affair, and would procure for her an honest husband, he would give her 1000*l.* on the day of marriage; and, if she made a good wife, would be further kind to her.

Filmer was very desirous to clear himself of having any hand in the blacker part of this plot. Sir Charles did not seem solicitous to detect and expose him: but left the whole upon his conscience. And having made before several objections to his account, which could not be so well obviated in England, he went over to Ireland with Filmer; and there very speedily settled everything to his own satisfaction; and, dismissing him more genteelly than he deserved, took upon himself the management of that estate, directing several obvious improvements to be made; which are likely to turn to great account.

On his return, he heard that Miss Obrien was ill of the small-pox. He was not, for her own sake, sorry for it. She suffered in her face, but still was pretty and genteel: and she is now the honest and happy wife of a tradesman near Golden Square, who is very fond of her. Sir Charles gave with her the promised sum, and 100*l.* more for wedding clothes.

One part of her happiness and her husband's is, that her aunt, supposing she had disgraced herself by this match, never comes near her: and her mother is returned to Ireland to her husband, greatly dissatisfied with her daughter on the same account.

While these matters were agitating, Sir Charles forgot not to inquire what steps had been taken with regard to the alliance proposed between himself and Lady Frances N——.

He paid his first visit to the father and brother of that lady.

All that the sisters know of the matter is, that the treaty was, on this first visit, entirely broken off. Their brother, however, speaks of the lady, and of the whole family, with great respect. The lady is known to esteem him highly. Her father, her brother, speak of him everywhere with great regard: Lord

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N—— calls him the finest young gentleman in England. And so, Lucy, I believe he is. Sir Charles Grandison, Lord N—— once said, knows better, by non-compliance, how to create friendships than most men do by compliance.

Lady L—— and Miss Grandison, who, as I have before intimated, favour another lady, once said to him, that the earl and his son Lord N—— were so constantly speaking in his praise, that they could not but think that it would at last be a match between him and Lady Frances. His answer was, the lady is infinitely deserving: *but it cannot be.*

I am ready to wish, he would say, what *can* be, that we need not—Ah, Lucy!—I know not what I would say: but so it will always be with silly girls, that distinguish not between the *would* and the *should:* one of which, is your

HARRIET BYRON.

—o—

LETTER LXIX.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

I WILL proceed with the family history.

Sir Charles forgot not, on his arrival in England, to pay an early visit to Lord W——, his mother's brother, who was then at his house near Windsor.

I have told you, that my lord had conceived a dislike to him; and that for no other reason but because his father loved him. Lord W—— was laid up with the gout when he came: but he was instantly admitted to his stately presence. The first salutations, on one side, were respectful; on the other, coldly civil. My lord often surveyed his kinsman from head to foot, as he sat; as if he were loath to like him, I suppose; yet knew not how to help it. He found fault with Sir Thomas. Sir Charles told him, that it was a very ungrateful thing to him to hear his father spoken slightly of. He desired his lordship to forbear reflections of that sort. My father, said he, is no more. I desire not to be made a party in any disputes that may have happened between him and your lordship. I come to attend you, as a duty which I owe to my mother's memory; and I hope this may be done without wounding that of my father.

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You say well, said my lord: but I am afraid, kinsman, by your air and manner, and *speech* too, that you want not your father's proud spirit.

I revere my father for his spirit, my lord. It might not always be exerted as your lordship, and his other relations, might wish: but he had a manly one. As to myself, I will help your lordship to my character at once. I am, indeed, a very proud man. I cannot stoop to flatter, and least of all men, the great and the rich: finding it difficult to restrain this fault, it is my whole study to direct it to laudable ends; and I hope, that I am too proud to do anything unworthy of my father's name, or of my mother's virtue.

Why, sir (and looked at him again from head to foot), your father never in his whole life said so good a thing.

Your lordship knew not my father as he deserved to be known. Where there are misunderstandings between two persons, though relations, the character of either is not to be taken from the other. But, my lord, this is, as I said before, a visit of duty: I have nothing to ask of your lordship but your good opinion; and no longer than I deserve it.

My lord was displeased. 'You have nothing to ask of me!'—repeated he. Let me tell you, *independent* sir, that I like not your speech. You may leave me, if you please: and when I want to see you again, I will send for you.

Your servant, my lord. And let me say, that I will not again attend you, till you do. But *when* you do, the summons of my *mother's brother* shall be cheerfully obeyed, notwithstanding this unkind treatment of *Lord W*——.

The very next day, my lord, hearing he was still at Windsor, viewing the curiosities of the place, sent to him: he directly went. My lord expressed himself highly pleased with his readiness to come, and apologised to him for his behaviour of the day before. He called him nephew, and swore that he was just such a young man as he had wished to see. Your mother used to say, proceeded he, that you could do what you would with her, should you even be unreasonable: and I beg of you to ask me no favour but what is fit for me to grant, for I fear I should grudge it after I had granted it; and call in question, what no man is willing to do, my own discretion.

He then asked him about the methods he intended to take

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with regard to his way of life. Sir Charles answered, that he was resolved to dispose of his racers, hunters, and dogs, as soon as he could: that he would take a survey of the timber upon his estate, and fell that which would be the worse for standing; and doubted not but that a part of it in Hampshire would turn to good account: but that he would plant an oakling for every oak he cut down, for the sake of posterity: he was determined, he said, to let the house in Essex; and even to sell the estate there, if it were necessary, to clear incumbrances; and to pay off the mortgage upon the Irish estate, which he had a notion was very improvable.

What did he propose to do for his sisters? who were, he found, absolutely in his power.

Marry them, my lord, as soon as I can. I have a good opinion of Lord L——. My elder sister loves him. I will inquire what will make him easy: and easy I will make him, on his marriage with her, if it be in my power. I will endeavour to make the younger happy too. And when these two points are settled, but not before, because I will not deceive the family with which I may engage, I will think of myself.

Bravo! bravo! said my lord; and his eyes, that were brimful some minutes before, then ran over. As I hope to be saved, I had a good mind to—to—to—And there he stopt.

I only ask for your approbation, my lord, or correction, if wrong. My father has been very regardful of my interests. He knew my heart, or he would perhaps have been more solicitous for his daughters. I don't find that my circumstances will be very narrow: and if they *are* I will live within compass, and even lay up. I endeavour to make a virtue of my pride, in this respect: I cannot live under obligation. I will endeavour to be just; and then, if I can, I will be generous. That is another species of my pride. I told your lordship, that if I could not conquer it, I would endeavour to make it innocent at least.

Bravo! bravo! again cried my lord—and threw his arms about his neck, and kissed his cheek, though he screamed out at the same time, having hurt his gouty knee with the effort.

And then, and then—said my lord, you will marry your-

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self. And if you marry with discretion, good Lord, what a *great* man will you be!—And how I shall love you!—Have you any thoughts of marriage, kinsman?—Let me be consulted in your match,—and—and—and—you will vastly oblige me. Now I believe, I shall begin to think the name of Grandison has a very agreeable sound with it. What a fine thing it is, for a young man to be able to clear up his mother's prudence so many years after she is gone, and lessen his father's follies! Your father did not use me well; and I must be allowed sometimes to speak my mind of him.

That, my lord, is the only point on which your lordship and I *can* differ.

Well, well, we *won't* differ. Only one thing, my dear kinsman: if you sell, give me the preference. Your father told me, that he would mortgage to any man upon God's earth sooner than to me. I took that very heinously.

There was a misunderstanding between you, my lord. My father had a noble spirit. He might think, that there would be a selfishness in the appearance had he asked of your lordship a favour. Little-spirited men sometimes choose to be obliged to relations, in hopes that payment will be less rigorously exacted, than by a stranger——

Ah, kinsman! kinsman!—that's the white side of the business.

Indeed, my lord, that would be a motive with me to avoid troubling your lordship in an exigence, were it to happen. For mistrust will arise from possibilities of being ungrateful when perhaps there is no room, were the heart to be known, for the suspicion.

Well said, however. You are a young man that one need not be afraid to be acquainted with. But what would you do as a lender? Would you think hardly of a man that wanted to be obliged to *you?*

Oh no!—But in this case I would be determined by prudence. If my friend regarded *himself* as the first person in the friendship; *me* but as the second, in cases that might hurt my fortune, and disable me from acting up to my spirit, to other friends; I would then let him know, that he thought as meanly of my understanding as of my justice.

Lord W—— was delighted with his nephew's notions.

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He over and over prophesied, that he would be a great man.

Sir Charles, with wonderful despatch, executed those designs, which he had told Lord W—— he would carry into effect. And the sale of the timber he cut down in Hampshire, and which lay convenient for water carriage, for the use of the government, furnished him with a very considerable sum.

I have mentioned, that Sir Charles, on his setting out from Florence to Paris, to attend his father's leave for his coming to England, had left his ward Miss Jervois, at the former place, in the protection of good Dr. Bartlett. He soon sent for them both over, and placed the young lady with a discreet widow gentlewoman, who had three prudent daughters; sometimes indulging her with leave to visit his sisters, who are very fond of her, as you have heard. And now let me add, that she is a humble petitioner to me, to procure her the felicity, as she calls it, to be constantly resident with Miss Grandison. She will be, she says, the best girl in the world, if she may be allowed this favour: and not one word of advice, either of her guardian, or of Miss Grandison, or of Lady L——, shall be lost upon her—and besides, as good women, said she, as Mrs. Lane and her daughters *are*, what protection can women give me, were my unhappy mother to be troublesome, and resolve to *have me*, as she is continually threatening?

What a new world opens to me, my Lucy, from the acquaintance I am permitted to hold with this family! God grant that your poor Harriet pay not too dearly for her knowledge!—She *would*, I believe you think, were she to be *entangled in a hopeless love*.

—o—

LETTER LXX.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Lord L—— came to town from Scotland within two or three months of Sir Charles's arrival in England. His first visit was to the young baronet; who, on my lord's avowing his passion for his sister, and her acknowledging her esteem

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for him, introduced him to her, and put their hands together, holding them between both his: With pleasure, said he, I join hands where hearts so worthy are united. Do me, my lord, the honour, from this moment, to look upon me as your brother. My father, I find, was a little embarrassed in his affairs. He loved his daughters, and perhaps was loath that they should early claim *another* protection: but, had he lived to make himself easy, I have no doubt but he would have made them happy. He has left that duty upon me—and I will perform it.

His sister was unable to speak for joy. My lord's tears were ready to start.

My father, proceeded Sir Charles, in one of his letters to me, acquainted me with the state of your lordship's affairs. Reckon upon my best services; promise, engage, undertake. The brother, my lord, hopes to make you easy: the sister will make you happy.

Miss Charlotte was affected with this scene; and she prayed, with her hands and eyes lifted up, that God would make his power as large as his heart: the whole world would then, she said, be benefited either by his bounty or his example.

Do you wonder now, my dear Mr. Reeves, that Miss Grandison, Lady L——, and Lord L——, know not how to contain their gratitude, when this beneficent-minded brother is spoken of?

And has not my Charlotte, said he, turning towards her, and looking at Miss Caroline, some happy man, that she can distinguish by her love? You are *equally* dear to me, my sisters. Make me your confident, Charlotte. Your inclinations shall be my choice.

Dear Miss Grandison, why did you mislead me by your boasts of unreservedness? What room was there for reserves to such a brother?—And yet it is plain, you have not let him know all your *heart;* and he seems to think so too. And now you are uneasy at a hint he has thrown out of that nature.

Two months before the marriage, Sir Charles put into his sister's hands a paper sealed up. Receive these, my Caroline, said he, as from your father's bounty, in compliance

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with what your mother would have wished, had we been blessed with her life. When you oblige Lord L—— with one hand, make him, with the other, this present: and entitle *yourself* to all the gratitude, with which I know his worthy heart will overflow, on *both* occasions. I have done but my duty. I have performed only an article of the will, which I have made in my mind for my father, as time was not lent to make one for himself.

He saluted her, and withdrew, before she broke the seal: and when she did, she found in it bank-notes for 10,000*l.*

She threw herself into a chair, and was unable for some time to stir; but recovering herself, hurried out to find her brother. She was told, he was in her sister's apartment. She found him not there, but Charlotte in tears. Sir Charles had just left her. What ails my Charlotte?

Oh, this brother, my Caroline!—There is no bearing his generous goodness. See that deed! See that paper that lies upon it! She took it up; and these were the contents of the paper:

'I have just now paid my sister Caroline the sum that 'I think she would have been entitled to expect from my 'father's bounty, and the family circumstances, had life 'been lent him to settle his affairs, and make a will. I have 'an entire confidence in the discretion of my Charlotte: 'and have, by the enclosed deed, established for her beyond 'the power of revocation, that independency as to fortune, 'to which, from my father's death, I think her entitled. 'And for this, having acted but as an executor, I claim no 'merit, but that of having fulfilled the supposed will of 'either of our parents, as either survived the other. Cherish, 'therefore, in your grateful heart, *their* memory. Remember, 'that when you marry, you change the name of Grandison. 'Yet, with all my pride, what is name?—Let the man be 'worthy of you: and be he who he will that you entitle to 'your vows, I will embrace him as the brother of your 'affectionate CHARLES GRANDISON.'

The deed was for the same sum as he had given her sister, and to carry interest.

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The two sisters congratulated, and wept over each other, as if distressed.—To be sure, they *were* distressed.

Caroline found out her brother: but when she approached him, could not utter one word of what she had meditated to say: but, dropping down on one knee, blessed him, as she owned, in heart, both for Lord L—— and herself; but could only express her gratitude by her lifted-up hands and eyes.

Just as he had raised and seated her, entered to them the equally grateful Charlotte. He placed her next her sister, and drawing a chair for himself, taking a hand of each, he thus addressed himself to them:

My dearest sisters, you are *too* sensible of these but *due* instances of my brotherly love. It has pleased God to take from us our father and mother. We are *more* than brother and sisters; and must supply to each other the wanting relations. Look upon me only as executor of a will, that *ought* to have been made, and perhaps *would*, had time been given. My circumstances are greater than I expected; greater, I dare say, than my father thought they would be. Less than I have done, could not be done, by a brother who had *power* to do this. You don't know how much you will oblige me, if you never say one word more on this subject. You will act with less dignity than becomes my sisters, if you look upon what I have done in any other light than as your due.

Oh, my aunt! be so good, as to let the servants prepare my apartment at Selby House. There is no living within the blazing glory of this man! But, for one's comfort, he seems to have one fault; and he owns it—and yet, does not acknowledgment annihilate that fault!—Oh no! for he thinks not of *correcting* it. This fault is *pride*. Do you mind *what* a stress he lays now and then on the family name? and, as above, *dignity*, says he, *that becomes my sisters!*—Proud mortal!—Oh, my Lucy! he *is* proud; *too* proud, I doubt, as well as *too* considerable in his fortunes—what would I say? —Yet, I know who would *study* to make him the happiest of men.—Spare me, spare me here, my uncle; or rather, skip over this passage, Lucy.

Sir Charles, at the end of eight months from his father's death, gave Caroline, with his own hand, to Lord L——.

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Charlotte has two humble servants, Lord G—— and Sir Walter Watkyns, as you have seen in my former letters; but likes not either of them.

Lord L—— carried his lady down to Scotland, where she was greatly admired and caressed by all his relations. How happy for your Harriet was their critically-proposed return, which carried down Sir Charles and Miss Charlotte to prepare everything at Colnebrook for their reception!

Sir Charles accompanied my Lord and Lady L—— as far on the way to Scotland as York; where he made a visit to Mrs. Eleanor Grandison, his father's maiden sister, who resides there. She, having heard of his goodness to his sisters, and to everybody else, with whom he had concerns, longed to see him; and on this occasion rejoiced in the opportunity he gave her to congratulate, to bless, and applaud her nephew.

What multitudes of things have I further to tell you, relating to this *strange* man!—*Let* me call him names.

I inquired after the history of the good Dr. Bartlett: but the ladies said, as they knew not the whole of it, they would refer me to the doctor himself. They knew however enough, they said, to reverence him as one of the most worthy and most pious of men. They believed, that he knew all the secrets of their brother's heart.

Strange, methinks, that these secrets lie so *deep!* Yet there does not seem anything so *very* forbidding, either in Sir Charles or the doctor, but that one might ask them a few innocent questions. And yet I did not use to be so very curious neither. Why should I be more so than his sisters?—Yet persons coming strangers into a family of extraordinary merit, are *apt*, I believe, to be more inquisitive about the affairs and particularities of that family, than those who make a part of it: and when they have no other motive for their curiosity, than a desire to applaud and imitate, I see not any great harm in it.

I was also very anxious to know, what, at so early an age (for Sir Charles was not then eighteen), were the faults he found with the governor appointed for him. It seems, the man was not only profligate himself, but, in order to keep himself in countenance, laid snares for the young gentleman's virtue; which, however, he had the happiness

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to escape; though at an age in which youth is generally unguarded. This man was also contentious, quarrelsome, and a drinker; and yet (as Sir Charles at the time acknowledged to his sisters), it had so very indifferent an appearance, for a young man to find fault with his governor, that, as well for the appearance-sake, as for the man's, he was very loath to complain, till he became insupportable. It was mentioned, as it ought, greatly to the honour of the young gentleman's frankness and magnanimity, that when, at last, he found himself obliged to complain of this wicked man to his father, he gave him a copy of the letter he wrote, as soon as he sent it away. You may make, sir, said he, what use you please of the step I have taken. You see my charge. I have not aggravated it. Only let me caution you, that, as I have not given you by my own misconduct any advantage over me, you do not make a still worse figure in my reply, if you give me occasion to justify my charge. My father loves his son. I *must* be his son. An altercation cannot end in your favour.

But on inquiry into the behaviour of this bad man (who might have tainted the morals of one of the finest youths on earth), which the son besought the father to make, before he paid any regard to his complaints, Sir Thomas dismissed him, and made a compliment to his son, that he should have no other governor for the future, than his own discretion.*

Miss Jervois's history is briefly this:

She had one of the best of fathers: her mother is one of the worst of women. A termagant, a swearer, a drinker, unchaste—Poor Mr Jervois!—I have told you, that he (a meek man) was obliged to abandon his country, to avoid her. Yet she wants to have her daughter under her own tuition—Terrible!—Sir Charles has had trouble with her. He expects to have more—Poor Miss Jervois!

Miss Emily's fortune is very great. The ladies say, not less than 50,000*l.* Her father was an Italian and Turkey merchant; and Sir Charles, by his management, has augmented it to that sum, by the recovery of some thousands of pounds, which Mr. Jervois had thought desperate.

* See further, Letter IX. vol. ii.

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And thus have I brought down, as briefly as I was able, though writing almost night and day (and greatly indulged in the latter by the ladies, who saw my heart was in the task), the history of this family, to the time when I had the happiness (by means, however, most shockingly undesirable) to be first acquainted with it.

And now a word or two to present situations.

Sir Charles is not yet come down, Lucy. And this is Monday!—Very well!—He made excuses by his cousin Grandison, who came down with my cousin Reeves on Sunday morning; and both went up together yesterday—Vastly busy, no doubt!—He will be here to-morrow, I *think*, he says. His excuses were to his sisters and Lord L——. I am glad he did not give himself the importance with your Harriet, to make any to her on his absence.

Miss Grandison complains that I open not my heart to her. She wants, she says, to open hers to me; but, as she has intricacies that I cannot have, she says I must *begin:* she knows not *how,* she pretends. What her secrets may be, I presume not to guess: but surely I cannot tell a sister, who, with *her* sister, favours another woman, that I have a regard for her brother; and that before I can be sure he has any for me.

She will play me a trick, she just now told me, if I will not let her know who the happy man in Northamptonshire is, whom I prefer to all others. That there *is* such a one *somewhere,* she says, she has no doubt: and if she find it out before I tell her, she will give me *no quarter,* speaking in the military phrase; which sometimes she is apt to do. Lady L—— smiles, and eyes me with great attention, when her sister is rallying me, as if she, also, wanted to find out some reason for my refusing Lord D——. I told them an hour ago, that I am beset with their eyes, and Lord L——'s; for Lady L—— keeps no one secret of her heart, nor, I believe, anybody's else, that she is mistress of, from her lord. Him, I think, of all the men I know (my uncle not excepted), I could sooner intrust with a secret. But have I, Lucy, any to reveal? It is, I hope, a secret to myself, that never will be unfolded, even *to* myself, that I love a man, who has not made professions of love to me. As to Sir Charles Gran-

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dison—But have done, Harriet! Thou hast named a man, that will lead thee—Whither will it lead me?

More than I am at present my own, I am, and will be ever, my dear Lucy, your affectionate, HARRIET BYRON.

—o—

LETTER LXXI.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Monday, March 13.

I WILL now tell you who the lady is to whom the two sisters have given their interest.

It is Lady Anne S——, the only daughter of the Earl of S——. A vast fortune, it seems, independent of her father; and yet certain of a very great one from him. She is to be here this very afternoon, on a visit to the two ladies. With all my heart. I hope she is a very agreeable lady. I hope she has a capacious mind. I hope—I don't know what to hope—And why? Because I find myself out to be a selfish wretch, and don't wish her to be so fine and so good a woman, as I *say* I do. Is love, if I *must* own love, a narrower of the heart?—I don't know whether, while it is in suspense, and is only on one side, it be not the parent of jealousy, envy, dissimulation; making the person pretend generosity, disinterestedness, and I cannot tell what; but secretly wishing that her rival may not be so worthy, so lovely, as she pretends to wish her to be.—Ah, Lucy! were one *sure*, one could afford to be *generous:* one might then look down with pity upon a rival, instead of being mortified with apprehensions of being looked down upon.

But I will be just to the education given me, and the example set me. Whatever I shall be able to do or to wish, while I am in *suspense;* when any happy woman becomes the wife of Sir Charles Grandison, I will revere her; and wish her, for his sake as well as her own, all the felicities that this world can afford; and if I cannot do this from my heart, I will disown that heart.

The two ladies set upon Mr. Grandison on Sunday, to get out of him the business that carried Sir Charles so often of late to Canterbury. But though he owned that he was

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not enjoined secrecy, he affected to amuse them, and strangely to romance; hinting to them a story of a fine woman in love with *him*, and he with *her;* yet neither of them thinking of marriage: Mr. Grandison valued not truth, nor scrupled solemn words, though ludicrously uttered, to make the most improbable stuff perplexing and teasing; and then the wretch laughed immoderately at the suspense he supposed he had caused.

What witless creatures, what mere nothings are these beaux, fine fellows, and laughers of men!—How silly must they think us women!—And how silly indeed are such of us as can keep in countenance, at our own expense, their folly!

He was left alone with me for half an hour last night; and, in a very serious manner, besought me to receive his addresses. I was greatly displeased with the two sisters; for I thought they intended to give him this opportunity, by their manner of withdrawing. Surely, thought I, I am not sunk so low in the eyes of the ladies of such a family as this, as to be thought by them a fit wife to the only worthless person in it, because I have not the fortune of Lady Anne S——. I will hear, thought I, what Miss Grandison says to this; and, although I had made excuses to my cousins Reeves, at *their* request, for staying here longer than I had intended, I will get away to town as fast as I can. Proud as they are of the name of Grandison, thought I, the name *only* won't do with Harriet Byron. I am as proud as they. I said nothing of my resentment; but told both ladies, the moment I saw them, of Mr. Grandison's declaration. They expressed themselves highly displeased with him for it; and said they would talk to him. Miss Grandison said she wondered at his *presumption*. His fortune was indeed very considerable, she said, notwithstanding the extravagance of his youth: but it was a high degree of confidence, in a man of such free principles, to think himself entitled to countenance from—in short, from such a lady as your Harriet, Lucy; whatever you may think of her in these days of her humiliation.

She added the goodness of my heart to her compliment. I hope it is not a bad one. *Then* it was that I told them of my thoughts of going to town on the occasion; and the two

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ladies instantly went to their cousin, and talked to him in such a manner, that he promised, if no more notice were taken of the matter, never again to give occasion for them to reprimand him on this subject. He had, indeed, he owned, no very *strong aspirations* after matrimony; and had balanced about it a good while, before he could allow himself to declare his passion so seriously: but only, as it was probable, that he might, at one time or other, enter the *pale*, he thought he never in his life saw a woman with whom he could be so happy as with me.

But you see, Lucy, by this address of Mr. Grandison, that nothing is thought of in the family of *another* nature. What makes me a little more affected than otherwise I believe I should be, is, that all you, my dear friends, are so much in love with this really great because good man. It is a very happy circumstance for a young woman, to look forward to a change of condition with a man, of whom every one of her relations highly approves. But what can't be, can't. I shall see what merit Lady Anne has by and by. But if fortune—Indeed, my dear, were I the first princess on earth, I would have no other man, if I might have him. And so I say, that am but poor Harriet Byron. By this time Lady D—— will have taken such measures, I hope, as will not disturb me in my resolution. It is *fixed*, my dear. I cannot help it. I *must* not, I *ought* not, I therefore *will* not, give my *hand*, whatever has passed between that lady and my aunt, to any man living, and leave a preference in my *heart* against that man. Gratitude, justice, virtue, decency, all forbid it.

And yet, as I see no hope, nor trace for hope, I have begun to attempt the conquest of my *hopeless*—What shall I call it?— *Passion?*—Well, if I *must* call it so, I must. A *child in love matters*, if I did not, would *find me out*, you know. Nor will I, however *hopeless*, be ashamed of owning it, if I can help it. Is not reason, is not purity, is not delicacy, with me? Is it *person* that I am in love with, if I *am* in love? No: it is virtue, it is goodness, it is generosity, it is true politeness, that I am captivated by; all centered in his one *good man*. What then have I to be ashamed of?— And yet I *am* a little ashamed now and then, for all that.

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After all, that love, which is founded on fancy, or exterior advantages, is a love, I should think, that may, and oftentimes *ought* to be overcome: but that which is founded on interior worth: that blazes out when charity, beneficence, piety, fortitude, are signally exerted by the object beloved; how can such a love as that be restrained, damped, suppressed? How can it, without damping every spark of generous goodness, in what my partial grandmamma calls a *fellow heart*, admiring and longing to promote and share in such glorious philanthropy?

Philanthropy!—Yes, my uncle: why should women, in compliance with the petulance of narrow-minded men, forbear to use words that some seem to think above them, when no other single word will equally express their sense? It will be said, they need not *write*. Well then, don't let them *read;* and carry it a little further, and they may be forbidden to *speak*. And every lordly man will then be a grand signior, and have his mute attendant.

But won't you think my heart a little at ease, that I can thus trifle? I would fain have it be at ease; and that makes me give way to any cheerful idea that rises to my mind.

The ladies here have made me read to them several passages out of my letters to you before I send them. They are more generous than I think I wish them to be, in allowing me to skip and pass over sentences and paragraphs as I please: for is not this allowing that I have something to write, or have written something, that they think I *ought* to keep from their knowledge; and which they do not *desire* to know? With all *my* heart. I will not be mean, Lucy.

Well, Lucy, Lady Anne has been here, and is gone. She is an agreeable woman. I can't say but she is *very* agreeable. And were she actually Lady Grandison, I think I could respect her. I *think* I could—But oh, my dear friends, what a happy creature was I before I came to London!

There was a good deal of discourse about Sir Charles. She owned that she thought him the handsomest man she ever saw in her life. She was in love with his great *character*, she said. She could go nowhere but he was the subject. She had heard of the affair between him and Sir Hargrave;

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and made me a hundred compliments on the occasion; and said, that her having heard that I was at Colnebrook, was one inducement to her to make this visit.

It seems she told Miss Grandison, that she thought me the prettiest creature she ever beheld.—*Creature* was her word—We are all creatures, 'tis true: but I think I never was more displeased with the sound of the word *creature*, than I was from Lady Anne.

My aunt's letter relating to what passed between her and Lady D—— is just brought me.

And so Lady D—— was greatly chagrined!—I am sorry for it. But, my dear aunt, you say, that she is not displeased with me in the main, and commends my sincerity. That, I hope, is but doing me justice. I am very glad to find that she knew not how to get over my prepossession in favour of another man. It was worthy of herself, and of my Lord D——'s character. I shall always respect her. I hope this affair is quite over.

My grandmamma regrets the uncertainty I am in: but did she not say herself that Sir Charles Grandison was too considerable in his fortune; in his merit? That we were but as the private, he the public, in this particular? What room is there then for regret? Why is the word *uncertainty* used? We may be *certain*—And there's an end of it. His sisters can rally me: 'Some happy man in Northampton-'shire!'—As much as to say, 'You must not think of our 'brother.'—'Lady Anne S—— has a vast fortune.' Is not that saying, 'What hope can *you* have, Harriet Byron?'—Well, I don't care. This life is but a passage, a short and a dark passage, to a better: and let one jostle, and another elbow, another push me, because they know the weakest must give way; yet I will endeavour steadily to pursue my course, till I get through it, and into broad and open day.

One word only more on this subject—There is but one man in the world whom I can honestly marry, my mind continuing what it is. His I cannot expect to be: I must then of necessity be a single woman as long as I live. Well! and where is the great evil of that? Shall I not have less

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cares, less anxieties?—I *shall*. And let me beg of my dear friends, that none of you will ever again mention marriage to your HARRIET BYRON.

—o—

LETTER LXXII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

Tuesday, March 14.

SIR CHARLES is come at last! He came time enough to breakfast, and with him the good Dr. Bartlett. My philosophy, I doubt, is gone again, quite gone; for one while at least. I must take sanctuary, and that very soon, at Selby House.

Every word that passes now, seems to me worth repeating. There is no describing how the presence of this man animates every one in company. But take only a part of what passed.

We were in hopes, Sir Charles, said Lord L——, that we should have had the pleasure of seeing you before now.

My heart was with you, my lord: and (taking my hand, for he sat next me, and bowing) the more ardently, I must own, for the pleasure I should have shared with you all, in the company of this your lovely guest.

[What business had he to take my hand? But, indeed, the character of *brother* might warrant the freedom.]

I was engaged most part of last week in a very melancholy attendance, as Mr. Grandison could have informed you.

But not a word of the matter, said Mr. Grandison, did I tell the ladies; looking at his two cousins. I amused them, as they love to do all mankind, when they have power.

The ladies, I hope, cousin, will punish you for this reflection.

I came not to town till Saturday, proceeded Sir Charles; and found a billet from Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, inviting himself, Mr. Merceda, Mr. Bagenhall, and Mr. Jordan, to pass the Sunday evening with me at St. James's Square. The company was not suitable to the day, nor the day to the proposed meeting. I made my excuses, and desired them to favour me at breakfast on Monday morning. They came. And when we were all in good humour with one another, I proposed, and was seconded by Mr. Jordan, that we would

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make a visit—You will hardly guess to whom, Miss Byron —It was to the widow Awberry at Paddington.

I started, and even trembled. What I suffered there was all in my mind.

He proceeded then to tell me, that he had, though not without some difficulty on Sir Hargrave's part, actually engaged him to draw upon his banker for the 100*l.* he had promised Wilson; on Mr. Merceda, on his banker for 50*l.*, and he himself generously added 50*l.* more; and giving, as he said, the air of a frolic to the performance of a promise, they all of them went to Paddington. There, satisfying themselves of the girl's love for Wilson, and of the widow's opinion of Wilson's good intentions by the girl; they let them know, that the sum of 200*l.* was deposited in Sir Charles's hands, to be paid on the day of marriage, as a portion for the young woman; and bid them demand it as soon as they thought fit. Neither Wilson nor the widow's son was there. The widow and her daughters were overjoyed at this unexpected good news.

They afterwards shewed Sir Charles, it seems, every scene of my distress; and told him, and the gentlemen, all but Sir Hargrave (who had not patience to hear it, and went into another room), my whole sad story. Sir Charles was pleased to say, that he was so much affected with it, that he had some little difficulty, on joining Sir Hargrave, to be as civil to him as he was before he heard the relation.

To one condition, it seems, the gentlemen insisted Sir Charles should consent, as an inducement for them to comply with his proposal. It was, that Sir Charles should dine with Sir Hargrave and the company at his house on the Forest, some one day in the next week, of which they would give him notice. They all insisted upon it; and Sir Charles said, he came the more readily into the proposal, as they declared, it would be the last time they should see him for at least a twelvemonth to come; they being determined to prosecute their intended tour.

Wilson and young Awberry waited on Sir Charles the same evening. The marriage is to be celebrated in a few days. Wilson says, that his widow-sister in Smithfield will, he is sure, admit him into a partnership with her, now that

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he shall have something to carry into the stock; for she loves his wife-elect; and the saving both of body and soul will be owing, he declared (with transport that left him speechless), to Sir Charles Grandison.

Everybody was delighted with the relation he gave. Dear Sir Charles, said Mr. Grandison, let me be allowed to believe the Roman Catholic doctrine of supererogation; and let me express my hope, that I your kinsman may be the better for your good works. If all you do is but necessary, the Lord have mercy upon me!

Miss Grandison said, if I had written to my friends the account of what I suffered from the vile attempt of Sir Hargrave, as she doubted not but I had, Lady L——, as well as herself, would take it for a particular mark of my confidence, if they might be allowed to peruse it.

When I am favoured, replied I, with the return of my letters, I will very cheerfully communicate to you, my dear ladies, my relation of this shocking affair.

They all expressed a pleasure in my frankness. Sir Charles said, he admired me beyond expression, for that noble criterion of innocence and goodness.

There, Lucy!

I think there is nothing in that part but what they may see.

—o—

LETTER LXXIII.

Miss Byron.—In continuation.

THE two sisters and Lord L—— were then solicitous to know what was the occasion, which he called melancholy, that had engaged his attendance so many days at Canterbury.

It is *really* a melancholy occasion, replied he. You must not be surprised, my lord, nor you, my sisters, if you see me in mourning in a few days. His sisters started. And so *truly*, must I. But I am his third sister, you know. He seemed in haste to explain himself, lest he should keep us in painful suspense. My journeyings to Canterbury have been occasioned by the melancholy necessity of visiting a sick friend, who is now no more.

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You had all such an opinion, said Mr. Grandison, that I could keep no secret, that——

You were resolved, interrupted Miss Grandison, to say anything but the truth. Indeed, cousin, you had better have been silent at this time—Is there a necessity, brother, for *us* to go into mourning?

There is not. I had a true value for the departed. But custom will oblige me to mourn outwardly, as an *executor* only. And I have given orders about that and other necessary matters.

Did we know the deceased gentleman, brother? said Lady L——.

No. His name was Danby. He was an eminent merchant; an Englishman; but, from his youth, settled in France. He had for months been in a languishing state of health; and at last, finding his recovery desperate, was desirous to die in his native country. He landed at Dover about two months ago: but his malady so greatly increased, that he was obliged to stop at Canterbury in his way to town; and there at last he yielded to the common destiny. The body was to be brought to town as this night. I have ordered it to an undertaker's. I must lock myself up for a day or two, when I go to town. His concerns are large; but, he told me, not intricate. He desired, that his will might not be opened till after his interment; and that that might be private. He has two nephews and a niece. I would have had him join them in the trust with me; but he refused to do so. An attempt once had been made upon his life, by villains set at work by a wicked brother, father of those nephews and that niece, of which they were innocent: they are worthy young people. I had the happiness to save his life; but had no merit in it; for my own safety was involved in his. I am afraid he has been too grateful.

But, my good brother, said Miss Grandison, were you not a little reserved on this occasion? You went and returned, and went and returned, to Canterbury, and never said one word to us of the call you had to go thither. For my part, I thought there was a lady in the case, I do assure you.

My reserve, as you call it, Charlotte, was rather accidental than designed; and yet I do now and then treat

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your agreeable curiosity as mariners are said to do a whale: I throw out a tub to divert it. But this was too melancholy an occasion to be sported with. I was affected by it. Had the gentleman lived to come to town, you would all have been acquainted with him. I love to communicate pleasure, but not pain; when, especially, no good end can be answered by the communication. I go to different places, and return, and hardly think it worth troubling my sisters with every movement. Had I thought you had any curiosity about my little journeyings to Canterbury, you should have had it answered. And yet I know my sister Charlotte loves to puzzle, and find out secrets where none are intended.

She blushed; and so did I. Your servant, sir, was all she said.

But, Charlotte, proceeded he, you thought it was a *lady* that I visited: you know not your brother. I never will keep a secret of that nature from *you*, my good lord, nor from *you*, my sisters, when I find myself either encouraged or inclined to make a second visit. It is for *your* sex, Charlotte, to be very chary of such secrets; and good reason, if you have any doubt, either of the man's worthiness, or of your own consequence with him.

He looked very earnestly at her, but smiled.

So, my brother! I thank you, humorously rubbing one side of her face (though she needed not to do so, to make both cheeks glow); this is another box on the same ear. I have been uneasy, I can tell you, sir, at a hint you threw out before you last went to Canterbury, as if I kept from you something that it behoved you to know. Now, pray, sir, will you be pleased to explain yourself?

And, since you put it so strongly to me, Charlotte, let me ask you—Have you not?

And let me ask you, sir—Do you think I have?

Perhaps, Charlotte, your solicitude on this subject, now, and the alarm you took at the time, on a very slight hint, might warrant——

No *warrants*, brother!—Pray be so good as to speak all that lies on your mind.

Ah, Charlotte! and looked, though smilingly, with meaning.

I will not bear this *Ah, Charlotte!* and that meaning look.

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And are you willing, my dear, to try this cause?

I demand my trial.

Charming innocence! thought I, at the time—Now shall I find some fault, I hope, in this almost perfect brother. I triumphed in my mind, for my Charlotte.

Who shall be your judge?

Yourself, sir.

God grant you may be found guilty, cousin, said Mr. Grandison, for your plaguing of me.

Has that wretch, looking at Mr. Grandison, insinuated anything?—She stopt.

Are you afraid, my sister?

I would not give that creature any advantage over me.

Sir Ch. I think *I* would, if there were fair room—You have too often all the game in your own hands. You should allow Mr. Grandison his chance.

Miss Gr. Not to arise from such an observing bystander, as my brother.

Sir Ch. Conscious, Charlotte!

Miss Gr. May be not——

Sir Ch. May be, is doubtful: May be *No,* implies May be *Yes.*

Lady L. You have made Charlotte uneasy: indeed, brother, you have. The poor girl has been harping upon this string ever since you have been gone.

Sir Ch. I am sorry what I said pressed so hard—Do *you,* Lady L——, if this delinquency comes to trial, offer yourself as an advocate for Charlotte?

Lady L. I know not any act of delinquency she has committed.

Sir Ch. The act of delinquency is this—Shall I, Charlotte, explain myself?

Miss Gr. Teasing man! How can you——

Mr. Grandison rubbed his hands, and rejoiced. Miss Grandison was nettled. She gave Mr. Grandison *such* a look!—I never saw such a contemptuous one—Pray, sir, do *you* withdraw, if you please.

Mr. Gr. Not I, by the mass! are you afraid of a trial in open court? Oh ho, cousin Charlotte!——

Miss Gr. Have I not a *cruel* brother, Miss Byron?

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Lord L. Our sister Charlotte really suffers, Sir Charles.

Sir Ch. I am sorry for it. The *innocent* should not suffer. We will drop the cause.

Lady L. Worse and worse, brother.

Sir Ch. How so, Lady L——? Is not Caroline innocent?

Dr. Bar. If an advocate be required, and you, Sir Charles, are judge, and not a pleader in this cause, I offer myself to Miss Grandison.

Sir Ch. A very powerful one she will then have. You think her cause a just one, doctor, by your offer. Will you, Charlotte, give Dr. Bartlett a brief? Or *have* you given him one?

Dr. Bar. I have no doubt of the justice of the cause.

Sir Ch. Nor of the justice of the *accuser*, I hope. I cannot be a *judge* in it.

Lady L. Nay, then!—Poor Charlotte!

Miss Gr. I wish, cousin Grandison, you would withdraw.

Mr. Gr. I wish, cousin Charlotte, you would *not* wish it.

Miss Gr. But are you serious, brother?

Sir Ch. Let us call another cause, sister, if you please. Pray, my lord, what visitors have you had since I had the honour to attend you?

Miss Gr. Nay, brother—Don't think——

Sir Ch. BE QUIET, Charlotte.

Lady L. Your own words, sister!—But we had a visit from Lady Anne S—— yesterday.

[I was glad to hear Lady L—— say this. But nothing came of it.]

Sir Ch. You have seen Lady Anne more than once, my Emily: how do you like Lady Anne?

Miss Emily. Very well, sir. She is a very agreeable lady. Don't you think so, sir?

Sir Ch. I do—but, Charlotte (and looked tenderly upon her), I must not have you uneasy.

She sat vexed—her complexion raised; and playing with a lump of sugar; and sometimes twirling round and round a tea cup; for the tea-things, through earnestness of talking, were not taken away, though the servants were withdrawn.

Mr. Gr. Well, I will leave you together, I think. Poor

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cousin Charlotte!—[Rising, he tapped her shoulder.]—Poor cousin Charlotte! Ha, ha, ha, hah!

Miss Gr. Impertinence! with a look, the fellow to that she gave him before.

Miss Emily. I will withdraw, if you please, madam; rising, and courtesying.

Miss Grandison nodded her assent. And Emily withdrew likewise.

Dr. Bartlett offered to do so. Miss Grandison seemed not to disapprove of his motion: but Sir Charles said, The doctor is retained on your part, Charlotte: he must hear the charge. Shall Miss Byron be judge?

I begged to be excused. The matter began to look like earnest.

Miss Gr. [Whispering me.] I wish, Harriet, I had opened my whole heart to you. Your nasty scribbling! Eternally at your pen; or I had.

Then I began to be afraid for her. Dear Miss Grandison! rewhispered I, it was not for me to obtrude—Dear Miss Grandison, my pen should never have interfered, if——

Miss Gr. [Still whispering.] One should be courted out of some sort of secrets. One is not very forward to begin some sort of discourses—yet the subjects most in our hearts, perhaps. But don't despise me. You see what an accuser I have: and so generous a one too, that one must half condemn one's self at setting out.

Har. [Whispering.] Fear nothing, my Charlotte. You are in a brother's hands.

Miss Gr. Well, Sir Charles; and now, if you please, for the charge. But you say you cannot be judge and accuser: Who shall be judge?

Sir Ch. Your own heart, Charlotte. I desire all present to be your advocates, if their judgment be with you: and if it be *not*, that they will pity you in silence.

He looked smilingly serious. Good heaven! thought I.

Miss Gr. Pity me!—Nay, then—But, pray, sir, your charge?

Sir Ch. The matter is too serious to be spoken of in metaphor.

Miss Gr. Good God!—Hem!—and twice more she hemmed—Pray, sir, begin. Begin while I have breath.

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Lord and Lady L——, and Dr. Bartlett, and I, looked very grave; and Miss Grandison looked, in general, *fretfully humble*, if I may so express myself: and everything being removed but the table, she played with her diamond ring; sometimes pulling it off, and putting it on; sometimes putting the tip of her finger in it, as it lay upon the table, and turning it round and round, swifter or slower, and stopping through downcast vexation, or earnest attention, as she found herself more or less affected—What a sweet confusion!

Sir Ch. You know, my dear Charlotte, that I, very early after my arrival, inquired after the state of your heart. You told me it was absolutely free.

Miss Gr. Well, sir.

Sir Ch. Not satisfied with your own acknowledgment; as I know that young ladies are too apt to make secrets of a passion that is not in itself illaudable [I know not why, when *proper* persons make inquiries, and for motives not ungenerous]; I asked your elder sister, who scrupled not to own hers, whether there were any one man whom you preferred to another?—She assured me that she knew not of any one.

Lady L. My sister knows I said truth.

Miss Gr. Well, well, Lady L——, nobody doubts your veracity.

Sir Ch. Dear Charlotte, keep your temper.

Miss Gr. Pray, sir, proceed—and the ring turned round very fast.

Sir Ch. On several occasions I put the same question, and had the same assurances. My reason for *repeating* my question was owing to an early intelligence—of which more by and by.

Miss Gr. Sir!

Sir Ch. And that I might either provide the money that was due to her as my sister, or to take time to pay it, according to the circumstances of her engagement; and take from her all apprehensions of control, in case that might affect the happiness of her life—These, and brotherly love, were the motives of my inquiry.

Miss Gr. Your generosity, sir, was without example.

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Sir Ch. Not so, I hope. My sisters had an *equitable*, if not a *legal*, right to what has been done. I found, on looking into my affairs, that, by a moderate calculation of the family circumstances, no man should think of addressing a daughter of Sir Thomas Grandison, without supposing himself entitled, either by his merits or fortune, to expect 10,000*l.* with her—and this, even allowing to the son the customary preferences given to men as men; though given for the sake of pride, perhaps, rather than natural justice. For does not tyrant custom make a daughter change *her* name in marriage, and give to a son, for the sake of *name* only, the estate of the common ancestor of both?

This generous hint affected me. It was nearly my own case, you know. I might otherwise have been a rich heiress, and might have had as strong pretensions to be distinguished by the Grandisons, for my fortune, as any Lady S—— in the kingdom. But worthless as those are, to whom, for the sake of the name, my father's estate is passed, I never grudged it to them till I came acquainted with these Grandisons.

Lord L. But who, Sir Charles, but you——

Sir Ch. Pray, my lord, let not your generosity mislead you to think that a favour, which is but a due. We shall not be judged by comparison. The laws of truth and justice are always the same. What others would not have done in the like situation, that let them look to: but what is the *mortal* man, who should make an unjust advantage of *mortality?*

Miss Grandison pulled out her handkerchief, put it to her eyes, and then in her lap; and putting half on, and half off by turns, her ring, looked now and then at me, as if she wished me to pity her.

Indeed, Lucy, I did pity her: every one did; and so did her judge, I daresay in his heart. But justice, my Lucy, is a severe thing. Who can bear a trial, if the integrity and greatness of this man's heart is to be the rule by which their actions are to be examined? Yet you shall hear how generous he was.

Sir Ch. Allow me, for Miss Byron's sake, who has been but lately *restored* to our family, to be a little more particular, than otherwise I need to be. I had not been long in

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England, before Sir Walter Watkyns desired my interest with my sister. I told him, that she was entirely her own mistress; and that I should not offer to lead her choice. Lord G—— made his court to her likewise; and applying to me received the same answer.

I entered, however, into serious talk with my sister upon this subject. She asked me what *I* thought of each gentleman. I told her frankly.

Miss Gr. And pray, brother, be so good as to repeat what you said of them. Let Miss Byron be judge, whether either of the portraits was very inviting.

Sir Ch. I told her, Miss Byron, that Sir Walter would, I presumed, be thought the handsomer man of the two. He was gay, lively, genteel; and had that courage in his air and manner that ladies were seldom displeased with. I had not, however, discovered any great depth in him. My sister, I imagined, if she married him, would have the superiority in good sense: but I question whether Sir Walter would easily find that out; or allow it, if he did. He was a brisk man for an hour, and might have wit and sense too; but indeed I hardly ever saw him out of ladies' company; and he seemed to be of opinion, that flash rather than fire was what would recommend him to them. Sometimes I have thought, I told her, that women of sense should punish such men with their contempt, and not reward them with their approbation, for thus indirectly affronting their understandings: but that I had known women of sense approve a man of that character; and each woman must determine for herself, what appeared most agreeable to her.

Miss Gr. [Whispering.] Well, Harriet——

Har. [Whispering.] Don't interrupt him.

Sir Ch. You remember, my dear Charlotte, that it was in this kind of way I spoke about Sir Walter Watkyns; and added, that he was independent; in possession of the family-estate, which I believed was a good one; and that he talked handsomely to me of settlements.

I do remember this, said Miss Grandison; and whispering me, I am afraid, said she, he knows too much; but the *person* he cannot know.—Well, sir, and pray be pleased to repeat what you said of Lord G——.

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Sir Ch. Lord G——, I told you, was a gay dressing man, but of a graver cast than the other. The fashion, rather than his inclination, seemed to govern his outward appearance. He was a modest man, and I feared had too much doubt of himself to appear with that dignity in the eye of a lively woman, which should give him a first consequence with her——

Miss Gr. Your servant, sir.

Sir Ch. I believe he would make a good husband: so perhaps might Sir Walter: but the one would *bear*, the other perhaps must be *borne with*. Ladies, as well as men, I presumed, had some foibles, that they would not care to part with. As to fortune, I added, that Lord G—— was dependent on his father's pleasure. He had, indeed, his father's entire approbation, I found, in his address: and I hoped that a sister of mine would not wish for any man's death, for the sake of either title or fortune. You have seen Lord G——, Miss Byron?

Har. What, Sir Charles, was Miss Grandison's answer?

[I did not care to give any opinion, that might either *hurt* or *humour* my Charlotte.]

Sir Ch. Charlotte told me, in so many words, that she did not approve of either. Each gentleman, said I, has besought me to be his advocate: a task that I have not undertaken. I only told them, that I would talk to my sister upon the subject: but did not think a brother ought to expect an influence over a sister, when the gentlemen suspected their own. You will remember, said I to my sister, that women cannot choose where they will; and that the same man cannot be everything—She desired me to tell her, which of the two *I* would prefer?—First, said I, let me repeat the question I have more than once put to you: have you any the least shadow of a preference in your heart to any third person?—What was my sister's answer? She said, she had not. And yet, had I not had the private intelligence I hinted at, I should have been apt to imagine, that I had some reason to repeat the question, from the *warmth*, both of *manner* and *accent*, with which she declared that she approved of neither. Women, I believe, do not, with *earnestness*, reject a man who is not *quite* disagreeable,

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and to whose quality and fortune there can be no objection, if they are absolutely unprejudiced in another's favour.

We women looked upon one another. I have no *doubt*, thought I, but Sir Charles came *honestly* by his knowledge of us.

The dear Charlotte sat uneasy. He proceeded.

However, I now made no question but my sister's affections were absolutely disengaged. My dear Charlotte, said I, I would rather be excused telling you *which* gentleman's suit I should incline to favour, lest my opinion should not have your inclination with it; and your mind, by that means, should suffer any embarrassment. She desired to know it.

Miss Gr. You were very generous, sir; I owned you were in this point, as well as in all others.

Sir Ch. I then declared in favour of Lord G——, as the man who would be most likely to make her happy; who would think himself most obliged to her for her favour: and I took the liberty to hint, that though I admired her for her vivacity, and even, when her wit carried its keenest edge, loved to be awakened by it, and wished it never to lose that edge: yet I imagined, that it would *hurt* such a man as Sir Walter. Lord G—— it would *enliven:* and I hoped, if she took pleasure in her innocent sallies, that she would think it *something*, so to choose, as that she should not be under a necessity of repressing those sprightly powers, that *very seldom* were to be wished to be reined in.

Miss Gr. True, sir. You said, *very seldom*, I remember.

Sir Ch. I never will flatter either a prince, or a lady; yet should be sorry to treat either of them rudely.—She then asked me after my *own* inclinations. I took this for a desire to avoid the subject we were upon; and would have *withdrawn;* but not in ill-humour. There was no reason for it. My sister was not obliged to follow me in a subject that was not agreeable to her: but I took care to let her know, that *her* question was not a disagreeable one to *me*; but would be more properly answered on some other occasion. She would have had me to stay.—For the sake of the former subject, do you ask me to stay, Charlotte?—No, said she.

Well then, my dear, take time to consider of it; and at

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some other opportunity we will resume it. Thus tender did I *intend* to be, with regard to my sister's inclinations.

Miss Grandison wiped her eyes—and said, but with an accent that had a little peevishness in it, You wanted not, sir, all this preparation. Nobody has the shadow of belief, that *you* could be wrong.

Sir Ch. If this, Charlotte, be well said; if, in that accent, it be *generously* said; I have done—and from my heart acquit you, and as cordially condemn myself, if I have appeared in your eye to intend to raise my own character at the expense of yours. Believe me, Charlotte, I had much rather, in a point of delicacy, that the brother should be found faulty than the sister: and let it pass, that I am so. —And only tell me, in what way you would wish me to serve you?

Miss Gr. Pardon me, brother. You can add forgiveness to the other obligations under which I labour. I was petulant.

Sir Ch. I do; most cordially I do.

Miss Gr. [Wiping her eyes.] But won't you proceed, *sir?*

Sir Ch. At another opportunity, *madam.*

Miss Gr. Madam!—Nay, now you are indeed angry with me. Pray, proceed.

Sir Ch. I am not: but you shall allow me an hour's conversation with you in your dressing-room, when you please.

Miss Gr. No!—Pray, proceed. Every one here is dear to me. Every one present must hear either my acquittal or condemnation. Pray, sir, proceed—Miss Byron, pray sit still—Pray (for we were all rising to go out) keep your seats. I believe I have been wrong. My brother said, you must pity me in silence, if you found me faulty. Perhaps I shall be obliged to you for your pity.—Pray, sir, be pleased to acquaint me with what you know of my faults.

Sir Ch. My dear Charlotte, I have said enough to point your fault to your own heart. If you know it; *that* I hope is sufficient.—Do not imagine, my dear, that I want to control you—But—He stopt.

Miss Gr. But *what,* sir?—Pray, sir—And she trembled with eagerness.

Sir Ch. But it was not right to—And yet, I wish that I were mistaken in this point, and my sister not wrong!

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Miss Gr. Well, sir, you have reason, I suppose, to think —There she stopt——

Sir Ch. That there is a man whom you can approve of, notwithstanding——

Miss Gr. All I have said to the contrary. Well, sir, if there be, it is a great fault to have denied it.

Sir Ch. That is all I mean—It is no fault in you to prefer one man to another. It is no fault in you to give this preference to any man, without consulting your brother. I proposed that you should be entirely mistress of your own conduct and actions. It would have been ungenerous in me, to have supposed you accountable to me, who had done no more than my duty by you. Dear Charlotte, do not imagine me capable of laying such a load on your free will: but I should not have been made to pronounce to Lord G——, and even to the earl his father (on their inquiries whether your affections were or were not engaged), in such a manner as gave them hopes of succeeding.

Miss Gr. Are you sure, sir?

Sir Ch. Oh, my sister, how hard fought (now must I say?) is this battle!—I can urge it no further. For *your* sake, I can urge it no further.

Miss Gr. Name your man, sir!——

Sir Ch. Not *my* man, Charlotte—Captain Anderson is not *my* man.

He arose; and, taking her motionless hand, pressed it with his lips.—Be not too much disturbed, said he. I am distressed, my sister, for your distress—I think, more than I am for the error: and, saying this, bowing to her, he withdrew.

He saw and pitied her confusion. She was quite confounded. It was very good for him to withdraw, to give her time to recover herself. Lady L—— gave her her salts. Miss Grandison hardly ever wanted salts before.

Oh what a poor creature am I, said she, even in my own eyes! Don't despise me, Harriet—Dr. Bartlett, can you excuse me for so *sturdy* a perseverance? Forgive me, my lord! —Lady L——, be indulgent to a sister's fault. But my brother will always see me in this depreciating light! A 'battle hard fought,' indeed! How one error, persisted in, produces another!

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When Sir Charles heard her voice, as talking, every one soothing and pitying her, he returned. She would have risen, with a disposition seemingly, as if she would have humbled herself at his feet: but he took her folded hands in one of his, and with the other drew a chair close to her, and sat down: with what sweet majesty, and mingled compassion in his countenance! Miss Grandison's *consciousness* made it terrible *only* to her.—Forgive me, sir! were her words.

Dear Charlotte, I do. We have all something to be forgiven for. We pity others then most cordially, when we want pity ourselves. Remember only, in the cases of other persons, to soften the severity of your virtue.

He had Mrs. Oldham in his thoughts, as we all afterwards concluded.

We know not, said he, to what *inconveniences* a small departure from principle will lead: and now let us look forward. But first, had you rather show me into your dressing-room?

Miss Gr. I have now no wish to conceal anything from the persons present. I will only withdraw for a few moments.

She went out. I followed her. And then wanting somebody to divide her fault with, the dear Charlotte blamed my *nasty* scribbling again: but for *that*, said she, I should have told you all.

And what, my dear, would that have done, returned I?—That would not have prevented——

No; but yet you might have given me your advice: I should have had the benefit of that; and my confessions would have been, then, perhaps, aforehand with his accusations.—But, forgive me, Harriet——

Oh, my Charlotte! thought I to myself, could you but rein in your charming spirit a little, *very* little, you would not have had two forgivenesses to ask instead of one.

END OF VOL. I.

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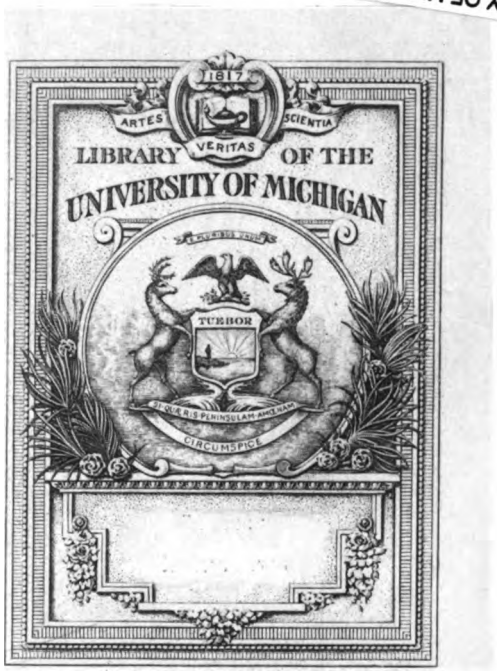

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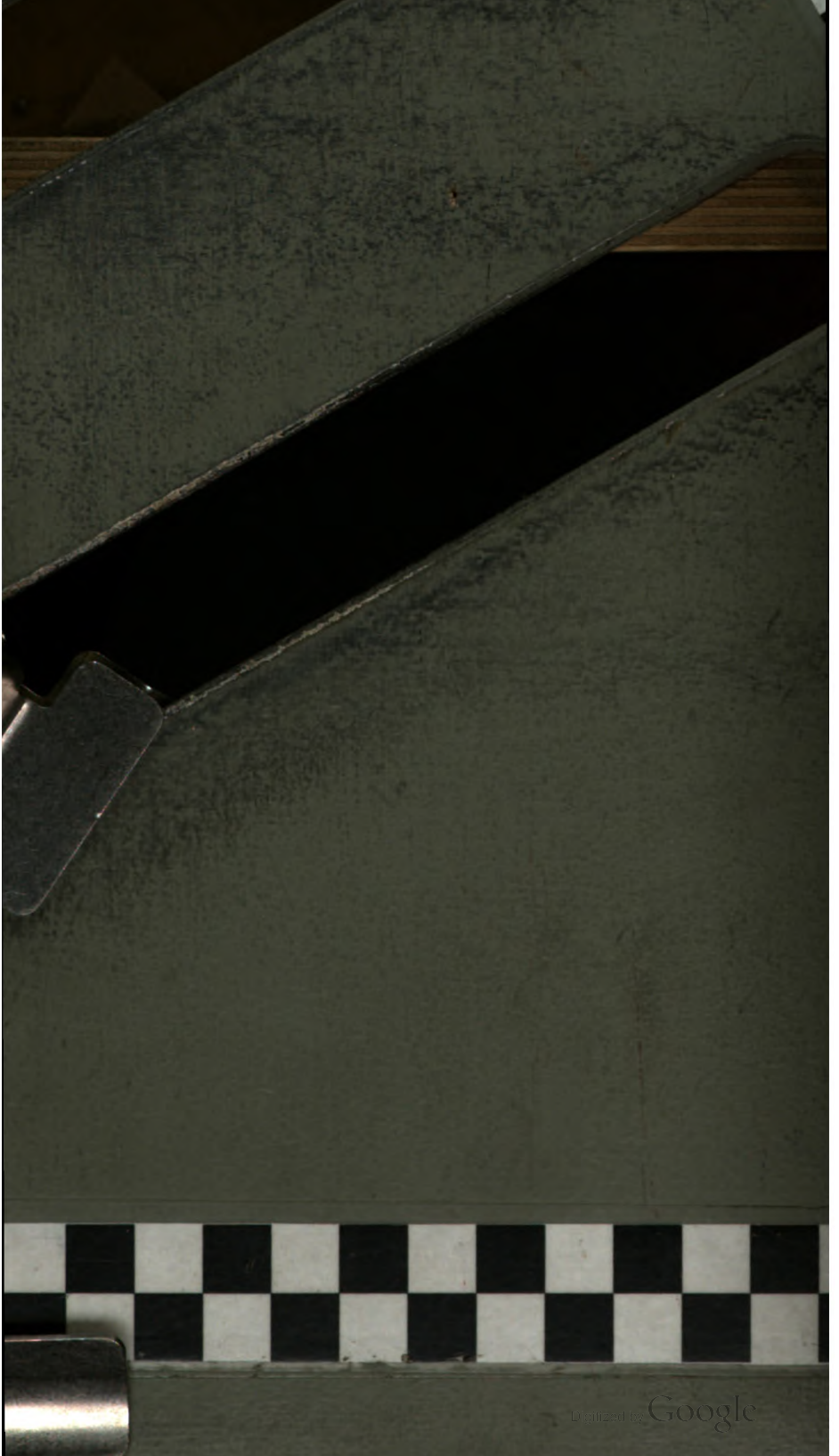
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